The Why of Methodism

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THE WHY

OF

METHODISM.

BY

DANIEL DORCHESTER, D.D.

"*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*"—PSA. 115. 1.

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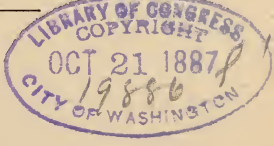

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INTRODUCTION.

On the first Sunday in May, 1887, in response to a courteous invitation by the pastor of the Unitarian church in Chelmsford, Mass., I occupied his pulpit and answered the question of his propounding: *Why am I a Methodist?* Prominent ministers of other denominations had responded to similar invitations, in the same pulpit, during the winter and spring, each vindicating his Church relation: Rev. Smith Baker, D.D., for the Congregationalists; Rev. Dr. A. P. Peabody, for the Unitarians; Rev. James Reed, for the Swedenborgians; Rev. Dr. Bush, for the Episcopalians; Rabbi Schenkle, for the Jews, etc.

I introduced my discourse by saying that, if I had been asked to tell how I *came to be* a Meth-

odist, I should have said, My father was a Methodist minister from 1816 to 1854, and I found myself, in childhood, in the lap of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At an early age I became a subject of religious impressions, professed conversion, and formally united with this Church.

Since I reached more mature years, in following out my mental inquiries, as I have come in contact with other currents of thought, I have been led, again and again, to reconsider the whole question of the divinity of Christianity and my Church relationship. As the result of each investigation, I have always been reassured in regard to both, so that my present relation to Christianity and to Methodism may be accepted as justified by my maturest thought, confirmed and reconfirmed in the presence of all the doubts, queries, objections, etc., of the so-called "advanced thought" of our times, with which I have endeavored to keep myself familiar.

The claims I shall put forth for Methodism are very high. No one can be more sensible of this than I am. But I do not see how I can abate them, and face the facts. I therefore set them forth in no personal feeling of invidiousness or boasting, though some comparisons and other allusions to other denominations are made, because my topic, as I apprehend it, cannot well be developed without it. And the whole work is done in the spirit of the motto on the title-page:

"*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.*"

The view of Methodism which I shall present is not narrow and technical, for it has not been by a few little things—some slight peculiarities—that my choice has been decided; but it is a broad survey of Methodism, as it stands forth in the religious history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the setting

which Providence has given it upon the canvas of the age; for Methodism has been a great factor of the times, and has deeply wrought itself into the life of the world. Methodism was raised up by God to perform a great and needed work.

It is this providential feature of Methodism that most deeply impresses me. It is the full conviction I have that *the hand of God* has been and still is in Methodism,

In its inception;
In its character;
In its influence;
In its polity,

that makes me a Methodist; for I want to live and work in line with God.

CHELSEA, MASS., *June* 1, 1887.

I.

THE WHY,

AS TO ITS ORIGIN.

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.—ACTS 1. 8.

I.

As to Its Origin, Methodism was Raised up by God for the Revival of Modern Christianity.

Intelligent students of history are familiar with the lapsed condition of Protestantism and the dubious religious prospects of the world when Methodism arose, in 1739; one hundred and forty-eight years ago.

Looking out upon the world at large, at that period, we find the Grand Sultan, the Sophi, and the Great Mogul the most potent arbiters of the destinies of nations. Compared with them, England, Russia, Germany, and the United States, now so mighty over vast areas, were then greatly inferior powers, with little political influence. The papacy dominated middle and southern Europe, was united to the state, and dictated all legislation. Nearly all of

Asia and Africa were under pagan and Mohammedan sway. The mighty worlds of Australasia and Polynesia and the East Indian Archipelago lay in the undisturbed slumbers of savagery and superstition. Scarcely three hundred thousand Protestant colonists occupied both American continents. All the remainder of this hemisphere was pagan or papal. All the religious missions of the world, except a few among the North American Indians in the English colonies, were papal; and the only religion not disseminating itself was the Protestant. During this period, the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts was formed in London to furnish the Gospel to the English colonists, and the Moravians commenced their foreign missionary work; but both were very feeble beginnings. Two hundred and twenty-two years had passed since the great Reformation was inaugurated under Luther. Protestantism had triumphed, and securely intrenched itself in political power, in most of northern Europe and in the British Isles.

Turning to England, we find that Puritanism and other forms of dissent, as sub-protests within the circle of Protestantism, championing a still purer faith and life, had arisen, exerted their influence, and passed away. The rigid regimen of Cromwell was followed by a terrible rebound—the fatal, sweeping reaction extending through a hundred years, leaving English Christianity, in the first half of the last century, in the darkest condition since the birth of English Protestantism.

Atheism and profanity were never so ascendant. Thick gloom overspread the horizon, and the dim religious light was "like the evening of the world." Political and social corruption, never since equaled, were every-where rampant. "Statesmen served their country and the devil together, laughing at the very idea of goodness, and encouraging their sons in shameless wickedness."

As for the English court, Bishop Stevens said, "It was a royal brothel." Dr. Samuel Johnson said to Boswell, "I remember the time

when it was common for English gentlemen to go to bed drunk every night in the week, and they were thought none the worse of for it." Delicate young women, in the highest circles, unblushingly talked "with a coarseness which editors of our day represent by asterisks." Such vile poetry as was then applauded would forever damn modern poetasters. The people laughed at indecency and profanity. The churches afforded no relief to the dark picture, for the reformers themselves needed to be reformed. Of the clergy of the Established Church, what shall we say but that they were involved in the general corruption? Those of the dissenting Churches were little better.

The *North British Review* said: "Never has a century risen on England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne (1702), and reached its misty noon beneath the second George (1732–1760)—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn. . . . The Puritans were buried, and the Methodists were not born. . . . The world had the idle, discon-

tented look of the morning after some mad holiday."

Sir John Barnard said: "It really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion." Montesquieu said: "There is no religion in England. If the subject is mentioned in society, it excites nothing but laughter. Not more than four or five members of the House of Commons are regular attendants at church." Bishop Butler said: "It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry. . . . And nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule."

In the magnificent cathedrals of England, on the Lord's day, the most eminent prelates preached to a dozen hearers; seldom, to two hundred; occasionally, to nobody but the sexton and the choir. The Dean of St. Patrick's, in Dublin, once preached to the sexton alone, and the gist of his sermon was, "Be a good man, John, and a Tory."

Bishop Burnet said: "I cannot look on without the deepest concern when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation." Speaking of the *clergy*, he said: "They think it a great hardship, if they are told they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better, before they can be trusted with the care of souls."

Blackstone (about 1760) listened to every clergyman of note in London, and said that "he heard not a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero; and that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard, whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, Mohammed, or of Christ."

Marsh:* "The common people of the Church of England were almost wholly neglected by her leading divines, and were fast sinking into practical Atheism, when those wonderful men, Whitefield and Wesley, arose, and by astonishing

* *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 357.

boldness and zeal arrested the attention of thousands on thousands to divine things."

Southey said: "There never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet and awakened those who slept."

Arianism and Socinianism were fashionable in the Established Church, and tainted the theology of many intelligent Dissenters. Even among the Independents and Presbyterians, the departures from evangelical theology were radical. Latitudinarianism spread widely through all religious bodies, and evangelical teachings were excluded from the pulpits.

A large class of divines held to a refined system of ethics having no connection with Christian motives or the vital principle of spiritual religion. "Dr. Blair, at Edinburgh, and Bishop Porteus, at London, were droning moral platitudes in the pulpit, while the masses of the people—especially in England—never heard of them or of the gospel they professed to preach. Never before, nor since, has the phenomenon been so

signally developed of Christianity gasping in the struggle to live on the religion of nature. The religion of the realm was Christianity without Christ. All that was peculiar to Christ as the way of salvation was practically ignored." *

Leslie Stephen says: "Hume and Paley curiously agreed in recommending young men of freethinking tendencies to take clerical orders." Many of the clergy "taught little that might not have been taught by Socrates or Confucius." Mr. Leckey† says: "The doctrines of depravity, the vicarious atonement, the necessity of salvation, the new birth, faith, the action of the Divine Spirit in the believer's soul, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, were seldom heard from in the Church of England pulpits." "Christianity was reduced to the lowest terms."

Isaac Taylor says of the Established Church, that it was "an ecclesiastical system under which

* Professor Austin Phelps, D.D., in the *Congregationalist*, March, 1886.

† *History of England in the 18th Century.*

the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly distinguished from it."

I pass by the similar testimonies of Dr. Watts, Archbishop Secker, and others.

The condition of the Churches in the American colonies was not much better. After visiting America, Whitefield said, "I am persuaded that the generality of preachers talk of an unknown Christ; and the reason why the congregations have been so dead is because they have had dead men preaching to them." The devoted Jarratt said of the ninety-five Episcopal ministers of Virginia, that he "knew of only one besides himself who held evangelical sentiments."

These rapidly narrated statements comprise only the briefest possible exhibit of the dismal condition and dubious prospects of religious faith during the first half of the last century.

The Quickening.

In the midst of this low religious condition the great revival under the Wesleys had its

origin. A striking analogy may be traced between the Wesleyan *renaissance* and the *renaissance* of the pre-Reformation period. In the latter, by which the revival of learning was ushered in all over Europe, and the Reformation as its sequence, classical studies performed a leading part. First, Roman literature was explored anew; then the Greek classics. Greece was visited, and in the troublesome times culminating in the capture of Constantinople, numerous Greek scholars, as refugees, rich in literary treasures, fled to the halls of the Medici, where they were received as apostles by eager students of the Greek tongue who crossed the Alps from northern and western Europe. Thus the new quickening was extended; many great European universities were started, and new throbs of intellectual life were given to the world.

So the Wesleyan *renaissance* had its inception in connection with classical life and study. The memorable club, at Oxford University, led by John Wesley, all proficients in the ancient

classics, devoted special attention to the critical study of the Greek Testament. Entering prayerfully into the inspection of the divine word, they were drawn into closer contact with the divine mind, and felt the pulsations of the divine heart. Clearer religious ideas and new impulses of spiritual life wakened them to higher convictions, and stimulated them to heroic religious action. The close, continuous, and prayerful study of the Greek Testament called off their minds from existing standards, kept them steadily directed to Christianity, in its *original* form and spirit, and made them pant to be conformed to it in heart and life. Thus apostolic Christianity became reproduced in them, investing them with new elements and measures of spiritual power, which made them the instaurators of a new era in the history of the Church of God.

The Methodist revival began as religious awakenings generally do, among the lower orders. But its reverberations soon reached the more cultivated society; and those infidel lords,

Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, rode out in stately carriages to see what "these Methodist loons were making such an ado about." The striking psychological phenomena of the movement were closely studied by such philosophic minds as Hume and Benjamin Franklin. Every Protestant sect soon felt the thrill. It was a baptism of fire.

The new religious zeal awakened detestation and obloquy. Those who became Methodists dropped out of respectability. Even persons in humble life, boot-blacks and chimney-sweeps, found there were social depths beneath them, to which the Methodists were consigned. Families were disrupted and children disinherited. Some cursed the Methodists in the-day time, but crept into their assemblies at night. Some believed, notwithstanding they had denounced them; and some denounced, because they believed. But every Church felt the new commotion. The Church of England could not wholly withstand the movement, for within her pale was heard the voice of the prophet. By direct reproof and

by the power of contrast, Methodism put new life into the Established Church, which has never since been wholly lost. The remonstrant action of Methodism was a stimulant, calling forth into living use resources long buried in the ancient standards. Every other religious denomination felt the throb of the Wesleyan pulsations.

All Methodist converts, male and female, were joyful witnesses for Christ, and went forth to active labor for their new Master. Wesleyanism was characterized by an intense vitality. It had in it more depth, more body, more solidity, and more distinctive religious character than the recent Salvation Army movement. It made itself known and felt, not by drum and fife, but by its own irrepressible, unmistakable, and constantly self-attesting religious life. Wherever it went, it lifted men to higher planes of moral character, and invested them with a cheerful, unaffected sanctity. It was a live, aggressive, regenerating force. Under the influence of Whitefield and the Countess of

Huntingdon, Calvinistic nonconformity rose, as from the dead, with an energy increasing ever since; and a powerful spiritual party was formed in the Established Church.

Looking back now to the first half of the last century, and following the stream of religious life to our times, we see that those young men of the "Oxford Club," stigmatized as Methodists, under the divine guidance and aid incepted a new era in the history of Christianity, which may fittingly be denominated a *renaissance* in modern Christianity, lifting it out of its low conditions into higher spiritual conditions.

II.

THE WHY,

AS TO ITS CHARACTER.

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As valleys are they spread forth,
As gardens by the river side,
As lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted,
As cedar trees beside the waters.—Num. 24. 5, 6.
Rev. Ver.

II.

As to Its Character, Methodism, Under God, is the Reproduction of Apostolic Christianity.

It is not a new thing to characterize Methodism as a revival of apostolic Christianity. But it is more: it is a reproduction; still more, it is the propagation of the recovered ideal.

We have already noticed that, when Wesley was in his cradle, practical, experimental religion was almost wholly unknown in England. When he came to be a man, and had his eyes opened to the deep spiritual meaning of the divine word, he lamented the dark and ruinous condition of religion all around him. He saw that while the great Reformation broke the dominion of popery in northern and western Europe, it only partially recovered the original character of Christianity; and that, in his day, it had so

sadly lapsed from its condition under the reformers, that what passed for religion was only a miserable parody upon pure Christianity. In such a time, John Wesley rose from his critical and prayerful communion with the Greek Testament, and proclaimed the original gospel—primitive Christianity.

Let us now analyze the Methodist movement, and inquire what were some of the elements of apostolic Christianity which had been practically lost, but were recovered by Methodism, and brought back into the actual life of the Church of God.

1. The first and most noticeable point in this restored ideal is *spiritual vitality*, as the prime element in personal religion.

In the early Church, signs of life appear on every hand; but after Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, it lost its spirituality. In the succeeding centuries, rites, ceremonies, and dogmas were substituted for vital godliness. In this condition Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Calvin, and Knox found it giving chief emphasis to

three things: submission to the hierarchy, a close observance of rites and ceremonies, and the acceptance of dogmas; ignoring the inward experience and the outward life. Grace and salvation, it was claimed, were conveyed through the exercise of priestly functions to submissive souls. This was all. No spirituality, nothing pertaining to character, was essential.

What did the Reformers do? Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague were chiefly controversialists, seeking to reform the Church from corrupt doctrines. The same was true with Luther, Calvin, and their co-workers. While there is no question but that they knew and taught much of practical, experimental religion, yet their work was chiefly with dogmas. The Church of Rome had persecuted as heretics those whose opinions deviated from her decretals. The reformers fell into the same practice, on the vital mistake that religion consists in opinions. With what pertinacity did Luther insist upon assent to his seventeen Articles of Faith—the Augsburg Confession. Calvin vexed

and persecuted all persons within his territorial area who did not subscribe to his twenty-one Articles of Faith. He compelled the citizens of Geneva not only to sign but also to swear by them, on pain of punishment. The registers of Geneva show that 414 persons were punished during two years (1558, 1559) for dissent to some one or more of his articles of belief; and Servetus was burned at the stake.

We do not undervalue the labors of the reformers. These men had a work to do, and performed valuable service to the Church of God, notwithstanding these glaring blemishes. The same things were true in Protestant England, where the Thirty-nine Articles were the test. Assent to them was the chief essential in personal religion; for the objective aim of the Reformation seemed to be primarily to draw men from the papal hierarchy and its dogmas to a new faith. At first the Puritans and other dissenters seemed to give prominence to the more spiritual elements of Christian character, for which they are entitled to great credit.

They reproved the people for their gross departures from the original intent of the Reformation, and called for better living. But they fell into the grievous fault of giving opinions undue prominence, insisting upon minute conformity to every item of their creed on the part of every communicant. When they set up a goverment for themselves in New England, by the law of the land every person was required to subscribe to their creed, before he could be a communicant or even an enfranchised citizen. The result was that religion came to be regarded as little more than a compliance with formulas of faith. For a long period prior to the advent of Methodism, says Parsons Cooke, it was the general custom in New England to receive members into the church "upon their consenting to a confession of faith," without requiring a Christian experience.

Many ministers, in New England and in Old England, in the churches of our Middle States and all over Protestant Europe, entered into the holy office of the Christian ministry without a re-

ligious experience, and many never reached such an experience. Their preaching, when it comprised something more than a little semi-pagan moralizing, was made up of dry doctrinal discussions, with a keen scent for heresy. They aimed chiefly to convert men to a set of opinions, for orthodoxy in belief was regarded as the chief essential in religion.

Such was the condition of the Protestant Churches in Europe and America when Methodism arose.

John Wesley went forth preaching religion of the heart. From the first the most notable characteristic of Methodism was *spirituality*. Mr. Wesley said: "I make no *opinion* the term of union with any man. I think and let think. What I want is holiness of heart and life. They who have this are my brother, and sister, and mother." As early as 1743, Mr. Wesley said: "The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the

judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point."

Mr. Wesley imposed a single condition on those who joined his societies; namely, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," and that it should be *shown by appropriate fruits;* namely, "*doing no evil*," and "*doing good of every kind.*" He declared, "We do not impose, in order to admission, any opinions whatever. We only ask, Is thy heart right as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand." Hence, Methodism has ever been a standing protest against bigotry. Its special mission is to develop holiness and charity.

While Wesley did not make speculative opinions the test of piety, he nevertheless insisted, with all the intensity of his soul, upon the great *doctrines of the* CROSS, and did all he could to build up a spiritual life upon and around them. He put them in the *foreground*, *guarded* and *defended* them. He did so, because he regarded these truths vital to Christian experience. Methodism has ever given great prominence to

experience. It has its doctrines, and it has ever vindicated them; but, at the same time, it has ever been noted for its catholicity—giving great latitude to belief—looking chiefly to the experience as the best conservator of theology. This experience Methodism has ever regarded as the first qualification for the ministry. All other denominations had required learning and recommended piety; Methodism required piety and recommended learning.

Methodism has thus been a new life. This has made it a quickening power.

2. The second element in this ideal was a legitimate concomitant of the preceding—*a revivalistic, soul-saving efficiency.*

The earliest stages of the apostolic Church were continuous revival periods. "The Lord added unto the Church daily such as were saved."* Acts ii, 47. How long this condition continued we know not. When the Church joined in an unholy alliance with the State, spiritual life and evangelistic power declined.

* Substantially the revised version.

The Church became dead, with only here and there living members and living groups.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century fought the outward battle, and wrought out the great principles of Protestantism, but did not, at first, develop much spirituality. From Luther to Wesley, there were few seasons of soul-saving efficiency except among the Moravians, the Presbyterians in Scotland, the Puritans of the earlier period in England, and of the first twenty years in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

When Methodism arose, this downward tendency to spiritual death and formalism had reached its lowest point. But, from its start, Methodism was a quickening power in the valley of dry bones. New life appeared, and revivals occurred with increased frequency in almost all the Churches. The soul-saving power of Methodism was wonderful. It has been well said, "To the listlessness of the pulpit and the ungodliness of the people, Wesley opposed three truths, which he believed to be drawn di-

rectly from the New Testament: 1. Man is lost. 2. Man may be saved, if he will. 3. He may be saved now; with a tremendous emphasis on the now." * Wesley was a pronounced supernaturalist, believing in the direct influence of the Holy Spirit in awakening and saving men. His followers held the same faith; and revivals inevitably followed such preaching.

3. Another distinctive feature of apostolic Christianity revived by Methodism is *the universal priesthood of believers.*

The laity of the apostolic Church were every-where active in religious services; and divine grace flowed directly to individual believers through the exercise of personal faith in Christ, the great High-priest. When the Church declined in spiritual character, the hierarchy assumed the exclusive functions of bestowing grace, and the laity were made dependent upon the prerogatives of an earthly priesthood.

After long centuries, Luther arose and pro-

* Dr. George R. Crooks.

claimed anew, "every man his own priest." The *theory* of the priesthood of believers was fought out in the Lutheran Reformation, but was not fully carried out in the *actual life* of the Protestant Churches. It was developed in an excessive and fanatical form among the Anabaptists of Germany and the early Quakers. It had a better development among the Puritans, and better still among the Moravians. But Methodism gave it a stronger impulse, put every convert upon his feet to testify for Christ, removed the padlock from woman's lips, and gave special prominence to social services. It instituted class-meetings, a means of grace unknown before. When Methodism arose, laymen seldom participated in religious meetings, and there were few prayer-meetings—in large areas, none.

Methodism every-where magnified social meetings. "Methodism," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "has practically restored the primitive 'priesthood of the people,' not only by the example of its lay local ministry, more than twice

as numerous * as its regular ministry, but by its exhorters, class-leaders, prayer-leaders, and the religious activity to which it has trained its laity generally."

4. Another characteristic of apostolic Christianity which Methodism revived, in her genius and life, was *an aggressive missionary spirit.*

The apostolic Church could not be localized. It continually looked beyond existing limits, and reached out unto unchristianized regions. In the course of time this spirit declined, and Church extension depended upon the civil power.

Early Protestantism was not distinctively missionary. Eliot, the Mayhews, and Brainerd among the Indians in America, the Moravians in Greenland and the West Indies, and a few Danes in southern India comprised the whole missionary movements of Protestantism until after the Wesleyan Reformation. Before the birth of Wesleyanism the tendency of devout spiritual inquirers

* Over seventy thousand Methodist local preachers in the world.

was to an intense self-hood in religious life. They pent up themselves in the cells of individual being—were hermits in their religious tastes, breathing a cloistral atmosphere, spending much time in morbid introspection, all showing ripest manifestations in self-centered monastic seclusion. This tendency was apparent in the earlier experiences of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and the other members of the "Oxford Club." The writings of the Mystics, Thomas à Kempis, Taylor, etc., were devoutly read and re-read, until they narrowly escaped a cloistral life. Their diaries were records of fluctuating religious moods and unsatisfying "experiences."

The baptism of the Spirit which they received saved them from their misconceptions and from themselves. Thenceforth they felt "the power of an endless life," and could not stagnate in a self-centered life, or ferment in a compressed cloister. The electric element of Christian faith found outlet in large-hearted Christ-like action. From the self-centered type of religion, there was a tremendous recoil to the self-

diffusive type of daring Christian activities. This was the secret power that projected those magnificent religious developments, Christian missions—foreign, domestic, and city. A missionary map at once became the symbol of the new Christianity—or rather of the old Christianity revived and restored.

Methodism was essentially missionary from the beginning. It never sought to occupy places prepared to hand, but it went directly to the people, in the streets, fields, commons, slums, and collieries. Its work was new work. It had a "*go*" in it—the gospel "*go*"—and was always going out further and further, among the destitute and neglected. It spread by the contagion of Christian love. It was not long in getting into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Then it appeared in the West Indies, in 1760; in Newfoundland, in 1765; in the United States, in 1766; and in Nova Scotia, in 1774. When only thirty years old, it was raising money for missionaries in the West Indies and the United States; and only forty years after the first

Methodist class was formed it organized a Bible Society—the first of a multitude of Bible Societies now in Christendom. When forty-five years old it organized the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, the largest of all the offshoots of Wesleyanism.

5. Another feature of apostolic Christianity which Methodism revived is *pecuniary and philanthropic benevolence.*

I need not dwell upon the striking evidences of these qualities in the apostolic Churches, which surprised the heathen and extorted their encomiums. Classic paganism knew nothing like it. When the Church became worldly, this spirit declined, and funds were extorted by the sale of offices, benefices, indulgences, and other selfish methods.

Under early Protestantism, pecuniary benevolence had a slow and meager development. The Moravians gave it an impulse; next came Wesley, instructing his followers, "Get all you can; save all you can; and give all you can;" and binding them to give "a penny a week, and

a shilling a quarter." Wesley rigidly enforced this rule. No religionist ever so emphasized the duty of giving, so anathematized covetousness and selfishness, so sharply reproved those who hoard up money, or so consistently and self-forgetfully illustrated his ideas of giving, in his own life. His life was a continuous sermon on benevolence.

6. Another feature of apostolic Christianity revived by Methodism is *moral purity as a condition of Church membership.*

Of the apostolic Christians, it was said that the people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Christ's impress was seen in his followers. Gradually the Church became corrupt, appallingly corrupt.

Protestantism was an improvement, but even its earliest stages were accompanied by wild excesses, lawlessness, and licentiousness, so that Luther said, "It seems as though for every devil expelled ten others came." Under early Puritanism there was developed a grandly pure, but rigid, austere, and sometimes cruel moral-

ity, which sacrificed the sweet amenities of true virtue, and fell into grievous faults. Reaction followed, and a low standard of admission to the Church existed in Europe and America. Those who suppose the moral standard of the New England churches, a century and more ago, was very high, and that the character of all the members was very saintly, do not correctly understand the situation. There was a good deal of sanctimoniousness on Sunday, and holy tones, and nasal whines, and punctilious observance of certain ceremonies. But drunkenness, sometimes of the clergy, and too often of the laity, "bundling" and licentiousness, oversharpness in trade, etc., were no barriers to membership in the churches. In the Middle States the moral condition was even worse.

Methodism, from the outset, was a sharp protest against immorality. It insisted upon pure lives; and thus it became not merely a *revival* but a *reformation*. This will be seen from John Wesley's "General Rules," which are

given here entire. The life-blood of Methodism is in them:

There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into these societies—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins. But, wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced: such is, the taking the name of God in vain; the profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother, returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling uncustomed goods; the giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers; doing to others as we would not they should do unto us; doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as the "putting on of gold

and costly apparel;" the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, and needless self-indulgence; laying up treasures upon earth; borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

Second, by doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all men: to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or are in prison; to their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that "we are not to do good unless our heart be free to it;" by doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only; by all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed; by running with patience the race that is set before them, "denying themselves and taking up their cross daily;" submitting to bear the reproach of Christ,

to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should "say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake."

Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting or abstinence.

7. Finally, Methodism restored *simplicity and purity* to Christian doctrine.

In apostolic times elaborate dialectical forms were unknown in the statement of truth. The great Teacher and his apostles presented truth in simple forms, without any attempts to harmonize and shape the truth into systems to suit human caprices or preconceived logical conditions. When the Church declined, biblical truth fell into the hands of the schoolmen, who coerced it into the categories and syllabuses of the subtle Greek, thrust it into the waistcoat of dialectical formularies, and bound it down and smothered it by the decrees of councils and the bulls of popes. Thus theology became a

dry scholastic husk, and a spirit of dogmatism dominated thought. In this condition, the Reformation found it; and under Protestantism much of the scholastic form and dogmatic spirit were retained.

Methodism came forth "a religion without philosophy," that is, in its objective presentation. It discarded scholastic and philosophical forms, and the dogmatic spirit. Wesley's mind was practical and executive, rather than speculative. He could have ranked high in scholastic and philosophic disquisitions. But he felt that he could not afford to engage in such work. He was so intent upon saving men that he sought the most direct method of reaching and moving the religious consciousness. His heart was on fire, and his convictions were "facts articulate." The fundamental ideas of Christianity he apprehended as *facts* rather than as speculative doctrines. These he affirmed with great emphasis; and beyond them his motto was, "Think and let think." He and his fellow-workers claimed to be *preachers*, not theologians. And yet

Methodist pulpits, says an eminent Congregational divine, have done "a knightly service" to theology of the vital, working kind.

When Methodism arose, Churchmen and many dissenters held that the Spirit of God had virtually departed from the world, ceasing with the miracle-working power of the apostolic age; and that the Bible and the Church took the place of the Spirit.* Wesley contended that the Holy Spirit is still to be expected to work in human hearts; that its influence is immediate and direct; and he connected it with the kindred doctrine of immediate justification by faith, and the comforting assurance of adoption by the same Spirit. Wesley persistently declared that these doctrines are contained in the articles of the Church of England, though obscured by the glosses of the theologians until their meaning was lost.

It was such perverse speculations that made Wesley say he was "sick of opinions"—of opinions offered as substitutes for character, and of all

* Hunt's *History of Religious Thought in England.*

theology which did not help men to a spiritual life. Every question pertaining to salvation Wesley submitted to the Bible, and laid particular stress upon doctrines which minister to life. The motto of Wesley and of Methodism has ever been, "Life is more than dogma." This we believe has been the beginning of the renovation of modern theology. Dogma is of importance chiefly as it ministers to life. A theology Methodism has, clearly defined and insisted upon, but it is chiefly concerned with those doctrines which mediate salvation to the human soul. Nor does it make the Christian consciousness the judge of what is divine in Scripture; but it makes the Scripture the test of the purity and reality of the Christian consciousness.

The wisdom of this doctrinal attitude of Methodism is seen from the fact that now, after almost one hundred and fifty years since its origin, no great heresy can be charged upon it; nor has there ever been any schism, out of the many that have occurred in Methodist ranks,

occasioned by divergent theological views; nor has there ever been needed any special repressive effort to put down erratic doctrinal tendencies from within.

Such are the elements of apostolic Christianity, which had long been lost out of the actual life of the Christian Church, but which were brought back, and made active working forces in the modern Church, through the influence of Methodism. As to the effects, we shall see in the next chapter.

III.

THE WHY,

AS TO ITS INFLUENCE.

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, ***WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!***—NUM. 23. 23.

III.

As to Its Influence, under God, Methodism has been, and still is, a Re-enforcement of the Church Universal.

Since Methodism revived the apostolic emphasis upon religious experience, as the essential condition of Church membership, and an indispensable qualification for the Christian ministry, spirituality has had a prominence, in almost all religious bodies, unknown for long ages.

Methodism and Revivals.

The revivalistic, soul-saving power of the Churches has also been augmented. The revivals in the Non-conformist Churches in England, not to speak of the Established Church, were very few for a century before Methodism arose. In this country, outside of fifteen years (1735–1745, 1795–1800), during all the last century,

there were few revivals. Many individual churches can be specified which had no revival for thirty, forty, fifty, and even one hundred years. Accessions came through the Half-way Covenant.

Rev. Ebenezer Porter, D.D., pastor of the Congregational Church in Washington, Conn., had a revival in 1801, but says* that for the sixty-four previous years of the existence of that church there had been no revival. Rev. Dr. Storrs,† of Braintree, Mass., had a revival in his church in 1811, but could find no evidence of any other revival in the previous one hundred years of its history. Rev. E. D. Griffin, D.D., said:‡ "Long before the death of Whitefield, in 1770, extensive revivals in America had ceased, except one in Stockbridge and some other parts of Berkshire Co., Mass., about 1772; and one in the north quarter of Lyme, Conn.,

* *New England Revivals.* By Bennet Tyler, D.D., p. 309.

† Semi-Centennial Sermon.

‡ *Lectures on Revivals.* By Rev. W. B. Sprague, D.D. Albany, 1832. Appendix, p. 151.

about the year 1780; and one in several towns in Litchfield Co., Conn., about the year 1783. I know of none that occurred afterward, until the time of which I am to speak—1797–1803." Rev. Luther Hart, of Connecticut, said:* "From an examination of all the records which we have been able to command, and from a pretty extensive inquiry of the living, we cannot find more than fifteen places in New England in which there was a special work of grace during the first forty years after the 'great revival' under Edwards and Whitefield."

With rare exceptions, the condition of the Churches all over the country was like what has been described. From 1750 to 1800 was a long period of turmoil and distractions: the French and Indian Wars; the agitations preceding the Revolution; the troubles of the Revolution; the evils of the *post-bellum* period; the French infidelity and English deism; the gross wickedness; the political controversies, sharp, violent, and vindictive, connected with the adop-

* *Christian Spectator*, June, 1833.

tion of the Federal Constitution; the evil influence of the French Revolution, which so many Americans closely sympathized with, are some of the elements which worked unfavorably to the cause of religion.

The Wesleyan Reformation revived English, and, in due time, American, Christianity. In small re-enforcements Methodism came to America, after 1766. It was organized at Baltimore, as a national Church, in 1784. Soon after, it penetrated all the States, and was felt as a powerful evangelizing agency.

A few revivals occurred in western Massachusetts and Connecticut, in 1797 and 1798, then all over the land, from 1799 to 1803, originating in Tennessee, with two brothers, a Methodist and a Presbyterian. Methodism had then become a flaming torch, lighting its fires in every field. The great revival of 1800 inaugurated a new era in American Christianity—an era of higher spirituality, and revival, soul-saving power—since which time revivals have become more numerous and powerful, so that they have awakened

the interest of the divines of continental Europe. During the last thirty years many churches have had a well-nigh uninterrupted revival condition.

As the result of this quickened condition, the evangelical Churches of the United States increased from 364,000 communicants, in 1800, to about 12,000,000, in 1886—a thirty-two-fold increase, while the population increased only eleven-fold.

Students of ecclesiastical history have estimated that, at the close of the first century of the Christian era, Christianity numbered not over 500,000 converts in the whole world. But in eighty-six years American Christianity alone gained over 11,500,000, or twenty-three times as many.

The part that Methodism has shared in this work may be judged from the fact that about 4,500,000* *of the* 12,000,000 *communicants, or over one third, in* 1886, *were Methodists of various branches.*

* See table at the end of the volume.

It is impossible to find a parallel of such remarkable revivalistic, soul-saving efficiency in the Christian Church, in all its history, as has been witnessed in connection with the influence of Methodism, in England and America, during the last one hundred and fifty years. As the efficient agent in this work, Methodism has ever given great prominence to the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

As to the priesthood of believers, Methodism has been a liberal contributor to the universal Church by her example and influence in calling all her converts into active work for the divine Master. We have noticed that such activities were not common when Methodism arose, and not until her influence had been widely extended. A fact will give us a view of the situation.

We have a testimony from the Half-Century Discourse (pp. 7, 8) of Rev. John Fisk, pastor of the Congregational Church in New Braintree, Mass., delivered October 20, 1846: "Fifty years ago, it was an unusual thing that any duty of a devotional character was performed, even

by professors of religion, except in their own families, especially in the presence of their pastor. It was not until I had been in this place more than eleven years, that I was permitted to hear a sentence of prayer offered by one of my people. So far as I ever learned, under the ministry of my predecessor there was not a social meeting in this place. It was much after this fashion in most other churches."

What progress has been made during the century, in the single item of prayer-meetings, in almost all denominations! What multitudes of laymen have been called out into Christian activities! Lay evangelical work in almost infinite variety—in city missions, home missions, foreign missions, in young men's and young women's Christian associations, in Christian temperance work, in colportage, in Sunday-schools, in tract distribution, in neighborhood meetings, etc.—traces its origin and impulse to the divine seal stamped upon the initial use of such forces in the Wesleyan revival.

It was inevitable that from such a reproduc-

tion of apostolic Christianity the general Church would catch the spiritual contagion. In the last decade of the last century, when Methodism had pervaded England, had penetrated the Established Church and the Non-conformist sects, and turned back the tide of formalism and infidelity, there began to be an awakening of zeal for the salvation of the world, and the great English foreign missionary societies were formed. In America, a few feeble beginnings of missionary societies, all for the home field, started just at the close of the last century, and the great foreign mission societies came into being in the quarter of a century following the opening of the revival era to which we have referred. City missions followed, and other evangelizing agencies—the glory of the modern Church.

Piety has ceased to be ascetic, has come out from the cloisters, and gone forth among the masses. Never since apostolic times has the general Church so deeply felt her duty to convert the world as during this century.

Modern Evangelizing Agencies Started by Methodism.

As to pecuniary benevolence, so inculcated by Wesley, and illustrated so conspicuously in his life and followers, the fruitage in the general Church is abundant. After England had been aroused, warmed, and illuminated by Methodism, the great English benevolent societies were organized.

In his Life of Wesley, Tyerman says: "The first *British Bible Society* that existed, 'The Naval and Military,' was projected by George Cussons, and organized by a small number of his Methodist companions. The *London Missionary Society* originated in an appeal from Melville Horne, who, for some years, was one of Wesley's itinerant preachers, and then became the successor of Fletcher, as vicar of Madeley. The *Church Missionary Society* was started by John Venn, the son of Henry Venn, a Methodist clergyman. The first *Tract Society* was formed by John Wesley and Thomas Coke, in

1782, seventeen years before the organization of the present great Religious Tract Society in Paternoster Row—a society, by the way, which was instituted chiefly by Rowland Hill, and two or three other Calvinistic Methodists. It is believed that the first *dispensary* that the world ever had was founded by Wesley himself, in connection with the Old Foundry, in Moorfields. The *Stranger's Friend Society*, paying every year from forty to fifty thousand visits to the sick in London, and relieving them as far as possible, is an institution to which Methodism gave birth, in 1785."

The Naval and Military Bible Society referred to was formed in 1779, twenty-five years before the great British and Foreign Bible Society was organized—the first of the numerous Bible societies now existing in the world.

Mr. Tyerman says: "It deserves to be mentioned that Hannah Ball, a young Methodist lady, had a Methodist Sunday-school at High Wycombe, fourteen years before Robert Raikes

began his at Gloucester; and that Sophia Cooke, another Methodist, who afterward became the wife of Samuel Bradburn, was the first who suggusted to Raikes the Sunday-school idea, and actually marched with him, at the head of his troop of ragged urchins, the first Sunday they were taken to the parish church."

Thus we see that most of the great religious and philanthropic institutions which now embody the moral power of Protestantism—the Bible societies, the missionary societies, and the Sunday-schools as an agency of the Church—sprung directly or indirectly from the influence of Methodism. Rev. Dr. Dobbin, of the Dublin University, himself a Churchman, said of the Bible, tract, and missionary societies, "Wesley started them all."

How wonderfully have the pecuniary benevolences and philanthropies multiplied during this century. Take three of the classes of offerings which have attracted attention more frequently than any others, and have commanded the most respect.

The contributions of the American Churches during this century have been:

For Home Missions	$93,842,733
" Foreign "	74,117,188
And the receipts, from all sources, of the religious publication houses of the U. S.	132,129,636
Total for *three* classes of agencies	$300,089,557

"Our age has come to be the age of missions. Philanthropic activity has reached a commanding altitude of success. The world no longer laughs at it. Silvern orators no longer entertain gentle and perfumed hearers with predictions of the failure of missions. Missions have now no occasion to ask for the world's respect; they command the world's admiration." *

Probably, since 1850, more money has been raised by the Protestant Churches of Christendom for purely evangelizing purposes, aside from current church expenses and local charities, than was raised for the same object in all the previous eighteen centuries.

* Rev. Professor Austin Phelps in the *Congregationalist*, March, 1886.

As to the Contribution of Methodism to Theology.

It should be noticed that before its advent the tendency was to speculation and the multiplication of opinions; but under Wesley theology concentrated in the cross, and upon individual action at the foot of the cross. While in works of systematic theology Methodism has not been illustrious, nevertheless she has done a highly respectable work in that department, and has contributed improvements of inestimable value to the popular theology, especially to the practical, working power of theology. On such a point as this it were better that another should speak. Professor Austin Phelps, D.D.,* of Andover, has generously and eloquently told the story of the influence of Methodism upon popular theology:

"It has been a stout ally of those who have labored to eliminate from the popular notion of Christianity the fictions of a limited atonement

* In the *Congregationalist*, March 25, 1886.

and the servitude of the human will. Before the advent of Methodism, these dogmas, to the majority of minds which came under their influence, had made salvation an impracticable business. Theoretically, the popular mind could make nothing else of it. The speculation in which adroit minds essayed to untie the knot in which these dogmas had bound popular inquiry had little weight in the pulpit. They were not useful there, because they could not be *used*. In many pulpits the preaching of repentance to unregenerate men had absolutely ceased. Logical minds holding those dogmas could not preach it. In private they said so, and in the pulpit they were dumb. To preach repentance as a duty to men who could not repent, and who until they did could have no assurance that the sacrifice of Christ had any concern with them, was an insult to the hearer and stultification to the preacher. Sensible men felt this and revolted. They would not sow seed on a marble quarry where nothing could grow. Rowland Hill once, on entering a certain church, was ad-

monished, 'We preach only to the elect here.' 'So will I,' he replied, 'if you will put a label on them.'

"Methodism cut the knot. Wesley and his associates denied the limitation of the atoning sacrifice by divine decree. They did it in no obscure or silken speech. They denounced the dogma with vehemence and scorn. They defied it as an invention of the devil. Indeed, throughout the controversy with Calvinism, Wesley was a savage. He spared neither foe nor friend, not even Whitefield. He gave us the iron hand bare of the velvet glove. But his unkempt ferocity of method achieved its object. It said what he meant, and hewed the way clear to the liberty of proclaiming a free salvation. That he and his successors flung broadcast. They preached it exultingly. They preached it like men free-born. It gave a ring of gladness to their ministrations. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs, at the sound of their voices.

"There was an electric spring to conquest in

the Gospel as they projected it upon the quivering sensibilities of men, which made it seem to them a novelty. The immense assemblies in the fields, when they listened to the impassioned harangues of Whitefield and Wesley, seemed to themselves to hear the word of God for the first time. Then, for the first time, the offer of salvation meant something to them. Men and women who, all their lives, had been whining the confession that they were 'miserable sinners,' not believing a word of it, suddenly found out that it was a fact. Sermons, as they heard them, were full of personal allusions. Then Christ became to them a necessity; and because a necessity, a reality. The sympathy of numbers redoubled the force of the convictions which sprang up in the soul of every one. Light shone reflected from a thousand mirrors. The day of Pentecost dawned again.

"Human freedom in matters of religion came to the faith of the Methodist commonality more circuitously. Yet it came with scarcely less power of persuasion as a corollary from the min-

istrations of the Methodist pulpit. Not as clear-cut dogma in theological science, such as it appears—and nowhere else so luminously—in the later Calvinism of New England, but as *fact*, the freedom of the human will has been built into Methodist theology as the people have conceived it from the beginning. Men who have denied it as dogma have used it as fact. The Wesleys denied it, but John Wesley preached it in his forty thousand sermons, and Charles Wesley sang it in hymns which have been heard around the globe.

"This contradiction, which was no contradiction, grew out of the intensity of the faith of the early Methodists in individual responsibility. 'The living soul in moral solitude with God' was the key-note of their preaching. Wesley used to say to his lay preachers: 'Remember you have but one thing to do—to bring the individual soul to Christ.'

"Now, no man can have his own soul set aflame with a sense of the responsibility of the individual man to a personal God, of a guilty

man to a holy God, of a redeemed man to a self-sacrificing God, and *not* preach the ability of man to obey God. No matter whether he believes it as dogma or not, he will preach it as fact. He will preach it with a force of implication which amounts to certainty. He may give to it one name, or another, or none. He may call it 'natural ability,' as the later Calvinism of New England does; or 'gracious ability,' as Wesley did; or no ability at all, as the elder Calvinism did; he will so preach it that awakened hearers will take it in and trust it and use it as *ability* pure and simple. In a great spiritual reform it will become a power of spiritual life in the popular thinking. And this is what Methodism made of it. As the groundwork of individual responsibility, it has been sent home to the conscience by the Methodist pulpit with an intensity of conviction which has often swept every thing before it.

"Robert Southey says that of all the hymns in the English language, 'none are more devoutly committed to memory and more fre-

quently repeated on death-beds than certain hymns by Charles Wesley.' But Methodist hymnology has done a broader service than that. When the Methodist pulpit has proved the power of men to repent by constraining them to act it with tears of godly sorrow, then the great congregation has caught it up, and, as if moved by the baton of an angel in the sky, has echoed and re-echoed it in hymns which have borne up the faith of souls in it as on the wings of the wind. Where in the comparison are our thundering organs and our surpliced boys posing in dim cathedrals; and where our puny quartettes performing before dumb assemblies?

"For the planting of great Christian truths deep in the heart of an awakened people, let us have John Wesley's tongue of fire, seconded by Charles Wesley's hymns floating heavenward on the twilight air from ten thousand Methodist voices. Under such conditions Methodism is inspired. To know what Methodist voices are under that inspiration, one must hear them. Mobs bellowing with infuriated

blood-thirst, which neither John Wesley's coal-black eye nor Whitefield's imperial voice could quell, have been known to turn and slink away when the truth was *sung at* them in Charles Wesley's hymns. Their ringleaders more than once broke down in tears and groans of remorse. They took the preacher by the hand, and went his way with him, arm in arm, swearing by all that is holy that not a hair of his head should be touched. Thus was Luther's saying verified anew: 'The devil can stand any thing but good music, and that makes him roar.'

"In this method of transfusion from the faith in individual responsibility, faith in man's power to repent has been in part the soul of every great Methodist revival, from the gathering of sixty thousand souls at Moorfields down to the last autumnal camp-meeting in the forests of Maine. Partly by the force of this Methodist intensity in the use of it, and partly by its own good sense, it has made its way as a living fact into the heart of churches whose standards to this day disown it as a dogma of speculative belief.

"This is a magnificent service, however imperfect and illogical, to the Church universal. No other truth so vital to spiritual religion has had so painful a birth as this of human freedom in the act of repentance. Augustine and his predecessors paganized Christianity in this respect for a thousand years. The reformers left the truth substantially as they found it. Calvinism, as defined in the Genevan and Scotch theologies, and in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church as well, was dead fatalism. The popular mind could not logically get any thing better from it. The offer of salvation, loaded with the doctrine of inability, meant no more to multitudes of hearers than 'Selah' did in the old editions of the Psalms. The struggles of the Calvinistic mind to rid itself of the incubus have not been a brilliant success. Ability to obey God has been sometimes denied and affirmed in the same creed. Scores of sermons have made a shuttlecock of it. Forth and back and forth again it has been knocked about, till it has fallen to the ground through sheer exhaustion

in the hand which has held the battledore. Never a man has been the wiser.

"We have reason to be grateful to any embodiment of Christian thought or enterprise which has helped us ever so infirmly to rescue such a truth from its tribulations, and restore it to its place as a power of spiritual life. The most triumphant way of proving any doctrine involved in human duty is to *use* it. Persuade men to act it out by *doing* their duty. Make it thus prove itself as fact, and time will take care of it as dogma. This Methodism has done for the doctrine of human freedom through the whole of her romantic history."

METHODISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO MORALS.

As to the effect of the high moral standard raised by Methodism, it must be judged in the light of the morals of those times compared with those of the present. It is not easy to conceive the grossness of life then allowed in the Church of England, in many of the Nonconformist churches of that country, and in this

country also. John Wesley would not tolerate such living among the members of his societies. He spoke with an awful plainness on the subject, and his Methodist *revival* became a *reformation.*

What has been the effect? The standard of Christian character necessary to membership in Protestant churches is incalculably higher than one hundred and fifty years ago, and is more rigidly enforced. Public morals have also been elevated.

The elevating influence of Methodism upon morals was very soon perceptible in English society. More than any other religious force then known it addressed itself to the masses; for its itinerant evangelists, long without sanctuaries, preached by way-sides and in open fields, and their earnest, direct appeals were well adapted to impress the hearts of the assembled multitudes.

Mr. Lecky says: "From about the middle of the eighteenth century are forming spirit was once more abroad, and a steady movement of moral ascent may be detected. The influence of

Pitt in politics, and the influence of Wesley and his followers in religion, were the earliest and most important agencies in effecting it. . . . The tone of thought and feeling was changed. . . . The standard of political honor was perceptibly raised. . . . Although the career of the elder Pitt, and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry, form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield, I think, in real importance, to that religious revolution which shortly before had been begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and of Whitefield."

Among the ulterior advantages of the Wesleyan reformation, Mr. Lecky cites its influence in preserving the English nation from the French revolutionizing tendencies of that trying period. He says: "England, on the whole, escaped the contagion. Many causes conspired to save her, but among them a prominent place must, I believe, be given to the new and vehement religious enthusiasm which was at that

very time passing through the middle and lower classes of the people, which had enlisted in its service a large proportion of the wilder and more impetuous reformers, and which recoiled with horror from the anti-Christian tenets that were associated with the Revolution in France."

The Contribution of Methodism to the Religious Life of the World.

Tyerman* says: "Who will deny, for instance, that Methodism has exercised a potent and beneficial influence upon other Churches? Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist Churches have all been largely indebted to Methodism, either directly or indirectly, for many of the best ministers and agents they have ever had. It is a remarkable fact that, during Wesley's life time, of the 690 men who acted under him 249 relinquished the itinerant ministry. These 249 *retirers* included not a few of the most intelligent, energetic, pious, and useful

* In his Life of Wesley, vol. i, p. 10.

preachers that Wesley had. Some left him on the ground of health; others began business, because as itinerant preachers they were unable to support their wives and families; but a large proportion became ordained ministers in other churches. In some instances the labors of these men and their brother Methodists led to marvelous results."

All through our history, in this country, we have been furnishing ministers to other denominations. It was so before 1800, as the fathers have testified, and it is still going on. But for Methodism, these Churches would have seriously suffered for the want of a supply of ministers. Some of our people are sensitive because so many able ministers go from us to the pulpits of other religious bodies. Rather than that, and in no spirit of vain exultation, we should rejoice that we have been able to render this service to the Church universal, sending them numerous ministers, and members too. It is to be hoped that we may be able to continue this liberal contribution to the great common cause

of religion in the future, as in the past. It is no small credit to us to do this, while at the same time we fill up our rapidly extending ranks. It takes 700 to 800 new recruits every year to supply our ministerial work. It is to be hoped that the fire will continue to burn on our altars, and that the spirit of testimony will thrust out many preachers into the field.

A committee reporting to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1884, lamenting the lack of ministers for the supply of their churches, said: "We hear sometimes expressions of alarm at the great number of ministers coming into our Church from sister denominations. The Board calls attention to the fact that, but for these sources of supply, the net increase of our ministry last year would have been only 11, against an increase of 99 churches. What should we have done for the supply of these new churches but for the 64 borrowed ministers? . . . The supply of ministers must be increased, or disaster is near." *

* Minutes of the General Assembly, 1884, p. 85.

It may be felt by some that I have ascribed too much to Methodism, giving her more credit for influencing the general Church than she is entitled to. But what I have said is the consensus of the best authorities in secular and ecclesiastical circles—parties impartial, standing wholly outside of Methodism. I will quote some of them.

A distinguished English writer, a layman of the Church of England (Isaac Taylor), has said of Methodism: "That great religious movement has, immediately or remotely, so given an impulse to Christian feeling and profession on all sides that it has come to present itself as the starting-point of our modern religious history; that the field-preaching of Wesley and Whitefield in 1739 was the event whence the religious epoch, now current, must date its commencement; that back to the events of that time we look, necessarily, as often as we seek to trace to its source whatever is most characteristic of the present time; and that yet this is not all, for the Methodism of the past age points forward

to the next coming development of the powers of the Gospel." The same writer again says that "many enlightened adherents of the Episcopal Church have not hesitated to acknowledge that it owes to Methodism, in great part, the modern revival of its energies."

He makes the same remark concerning the influence of Methodism on other Protestant Churches: "By the new life which Methodism has diffused on all sides, it has preserved from extinction, and has reanimated, the languishing non-conformity of the last century, which, just at the time of the Methodistic revival, was rapidly in course to be found nowhere but in books."

The *New York Examiner* (Baptist) said of Methodism that it was "God's appointed instrumentality for arousing the English people from the slumbers of a dead formalism, and imparting to millions of our race in all lands the spirit of vital Christianity."

Of its influence in promoting Christian union, the *Christian Examiner* (Unitarian) said:

"Methodism has had a grand mission to fulfill in modern Christendom; a mission of meditation between differing sects, on the one hand, and between an exclusive Church and a neglected world on the other. And there is a moral majesty in the firm and sure tread with which it has marched to the accomplishment of its work."

Mr. Lecky said of the Wesleyan movement that "it incalculably increased the efficiency of almost every religious body;" that "it has been more or less felt by every Protestant community speaking the English tongue; and that Wesley has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century;" that "it also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history."

A writer in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (in January, 1864) said, "that something of vital Chris-

tianity exists among professed believers of every name; that the doctrine of justification by faith is generally understood and preached; that we are not blind Pharisees or dead formalists, or practical Socinians and deists; we may trace the cause, in great part (we cannot tell how largely), to the Holy Club of Oxford Methodists."

Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D.D., in his *Pitt Street Chapel Lectures* (p. 155), speaking of the Wesleys and Methodism, acknowledged "the depths of Divine wisdom in allowing those mighty men to become what they have become in England and elsewhere, a great stimulant force in Christendom. They are in some respects the flying artillery in the sacramental host. What denomination can show greater exploits, more versatile service, and larger conquests?"

At the unveiling of the tablet in Westminster Abbey, in 1876, to the memory of John and Charles Wesley, Dean Stanley said, "They preached those great effects which have never

since died out in English Christendom." On another occasion this eloquent Broad Churchman said, "The Methodist movement in both its branches, Arminian and Calvinistic, has molded the spiritual character of the English-speaking Protestantism of the world."

A writer in the *North British Review* (1847), referring to the time when Methodism arose, said: "The time was near at hand when the measure of iniquity was full to the very brim, and the land was become reprobate, blighted, and accursed by its enormities, and scathed and rejected of God. This awful doom was, however, averted, and the revival of religion denominated Methodism was the principal means at once of saving the country from so great a calamity, and of introducing the brightest era in British history."

Sir Launcelot Shadwell, late Vice-Chancellor of England, said: "It is my firm belief that to the Wesleyan body we are indebted for a large proportion of the religious feeling which exists among the general body of the commu-

nity, not only of this country, but throughout a great portion of the civilized world besides."

Rev. Philip Schaff, D.D.,* said: "Methodism is the youngest, and yet numerically the strongest, of the large Protestant bodies in America. It is the outcome of the great Anglo-American revival—conducted by John Wesley, the organizer; Charles Wesley, the hymnist; and George Whitefield, the evangelist—of the religious movement of the eighteenth century, which otherwise figures in Church history as a barren century of infidelity and revolution. . . . It has made the Arminian creed a converting agency, and given it practical power such as it never had before," etc.

Rev. Dr. Tyng, at the Evangelical Alliance meeting held in London, said: "I came from a land where you might as well forget the proud oaks that tower in our forests, the glowing capital we have erected in the center of our hills, or the principles of truth and liberty we endeavor to

* In an address upon "Religion in America," before the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Basle, in 1879.

disseminate, as to forget the influence of Methodism and the benefits we have secured thereby."

Rev. Robert Baird, D.D., said: "Methodism is the most powerful element in the religious prosperity of the United States, as well as one of the firmest pillars of our civil and religious institutions."

A Presbyterian clergyman of great prominence recently said: "I trust Methodism will continue to teach us that it is possible to make the rich and poor realize and illustrate religious companionship and equality."

The great historian of our country, Hon. George Bancroft, says: "The Methodists were the pioneers of religion; the breath of liberty has wafted their messages to the masses of the people, encouraged them to collect, white and black, in church or green wood, for council in divine love and the full assurance of faith, and carried their consolations and songs and prayers to the farthest cabins of the wilderness."

The late Archbishop Spaulding said: "The only sect that Roman Catholicism fears is or-

ganized Methodism, and this fear is based upon its aggressive zeal and its hearty and simple presentation of truth to the common people, without making any preposterous claims to apostolic successorship or offensive assertion of being *the Church.* I greatly fear the influence of Methodism upon the second and third generations of imported Romanists, provided a free-school system should be enforced; and the Methodists, being the most numerous, and favoring the system, increases my solicitude." *

A writer in the *Christian Quarterly*, on "Our Representative Religions," says: "On the whole, the Methodist Church will be seen to be a great organization, moving on the world for definite and powerful results, striking where there is most to be done. . . . It converts for all the other Churches; for, of the products of an ordinary Methodist revival, some go to the Presbyterian, some to the Baptist, and some to the Episcopalian and other Churches. And of those

* In a conversation with Rev. J. M. King, D.D. Methodist Centennial Volume, 1884, p. 278.

who unite with the Methodist Church, including all classes of temperaments, many subsequently leave it for others, because constitutionally not adapted to be Methodists. But notwithstanding it supplies all other Churches, it still keeps itself larger than any of the rest, and increases at a faster rate."

Prof. Austin Phelps, D.D., said: "The rise of Methodism was the birth of a spiritual reform of which all Christian denominations in Great Britain and America were in desperate need. . . . The chief power in saving to the future the old Church of Cranmer and Ridley was the Methodist revival. . . . English Christianity has never lost the elements of spiritual life which Methodism, by direct reproof and by the power of contrast, then put into it. . . . It was a re-enforcement of apostolic Christianity, also, *in every other Christian denomination in the English-speaking nations and colonies.* We have all felt the throb of its pulsations. It has been what new blood is to falling dynasties and decadent races."

IV.

THE WHY,

AS TO ITS POLITY.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. . . .

For the body is not one member, but many. . . .

But now are they many members, yet but one body. . . .

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.—1 Cor. 12. 12-27.

IV.

As to Its Polity, Methodism is Rooted in the Most Vital Principle, both of Race Life and of the Spiritual Kingdom.

One of the most common objections to Methodism is its strong polity; its connectionalism, as opposed to independency; its itinerancy, as opposed to a settled pastorate; and the assignment of pastors by the Bishop, rather than by the choice of the people. I propose to show that these peculiarities grew out of one fundamental principle upon which the polity of Methodism is predicated.

Years ago, some Frenchmen, not familiar with the teachings of the Bible, supposed they had discovered a new truth in regard to the human race. Availing themselves of the facility which their language affords for coining terms to express scientific and philosophical

ideas, they invented the word *solidarité*, as the vehicle of their new thought. Slightly Anglicizing it, we have the word solidarity. For this word, says Trench, "we are indebted to the French communists," who use it to "signify a community in gain or loss, in honor or dishonor, a being (so to speak) all in the same bottom." Trench adds, this term is "so convenient that it will be in vain to struggle against its reception among us." Webster defines it, "an entire union or consolidation of interests and responsibilities; fellowship."

By this term is meant that individuals are not isolated personalities, independent of each other, like trees standing separately in a field, but like branches on a common stock or buds on a common bough. The same life-sap flows through them all; so that, if the life of the tree is attacked anywhere—in its root, its trunk, its limbs—all the buds feel it. Yet each bud has a life of its own, and develops its own stalk, leaves, blossom, fruit. Each bud and leaf is necessary to the life and growth of the tree;

its breathing-places—inhaling the oxygen, and bringing this invigorating influence into the life of the tree. So mutual and all-pervasive are these relations between the boughs, buds, leaves, and trunk, that if either fails to perform its functions the tree will suffer. So it is with individual men in the great tree of mankind. None liveth to himself alone, or dieth to himself alone. If one suffers, all suffer. If the life of mankind becomes diseased, individual men are also affected, and whatever improves the life of the race improves the individual members of the race. Such is the common life-connection of humanity. It is a solid, a unit. As individuals, we are parts of a whole, with which we are bound in relations of mutual dependence and service. We have a common race life. This is what the term solidarity means.

This term contains no new principle, but one as old as Christianity, which long ago declared that God "made of one blood all nations of men." The golden rule is predicated upon this

great underlying race truth. So also the second great commandment. The clearest Christian expression of this truth is in the language of St. Paul—"We are members one of another." "The body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body." This truth is very prominent in Paul's epistles.

This principle is one of the broadest and most fundamental of all known truths.

IT SUSTAINS A VITAL RELATION TO THE HUMAN RACE.

The common race life is dependent upon it.

It stands opposed to artificial divisions of the human family into *castes*, to aristocratic exclusiveness, to slavery, war, and every thing that estranges nations and communities. It condemns all wrongs against our fellows, for an evil done to one is a wound inflicted upon the race. The virus enters into its common life. This principle is the basis of mutual assistance.

It was a profound remark of Sir Walter Scott, that, if the element of sympathy should die out of the human heart, the race could not protract its existence through another generation. Philanthropy, moral and social reforms, educational movements for the masses, and all charities, have their origin in this principle. It lies at the foundation of all moral relations and duties in the social sphere. Impure acts, words, and examples taint the moral life of the race, sending their pernicious influence through large circles and for many generations.

If the principle under consideration is so important, as regards the common life of the race, *it ought also to be recognized in the civil polities of the nations.*

The preamble of the Massachusetts Constitution declares:

"The body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals; it is a social compact, by which the whole people covenant with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people,

that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good."

Natural rights are surrendered when any government is formed, in order to promote the greater good of the whole. This principle links us in a common race life.

All true progress in government is an approximation toward the perfect recognition of the principle that we are "members one of another." In the earlier and untutored periods of national life, it was only slightly recognized. It is the ideal of the periods of better development and fuller manhood.

In the civil polities of the nations there have been two extremes—*Absolutism* and *Democracy*—both of which ignore this truth. Some governments are of a mixed character, having features in common with one of these extremes, and perhaps some resemblance to both. This is especially true of provisional governments.

In *absolute* government, power centers in the head—king or emperor—not conferred according to constitutional provisions, but assumed, or

inherited. No power rises from the people to the head; but starting from the head it descends to the people. Such has been the government of Mohammedan and pagan lands, and, until recent centuries, of almost all Europe also. It was the only thing practicable in the earlier periods of the race. The Mosaic economy provided some limitations of this absolutism in advance of any thing that appeared in the pre-Christian ages. In limited monarchies, the sovereign power is curtailed by constitutional restrictions; and every constitutional limitation is an expression, more or less, of the principle that we are "members one of another." The British Magna Charta, a notable guarantee of popular rights against absolutism, is a conspicuous illustration; and the principles embodied six centuries and a half ago, in that memorable document, the basis of English liberties, have been widely expanded and applied in the successive centuries. The movement has been a progressive abridgement of absolute prerogative among people of almost every clime and land.

The other extreme is *pure democracy*. To some extent this form of government recognizes the principle that we are "members one of another," but only in an inchoate and unorganized way, for it is a government wholly by the people. All business being transacted in an assembly of the whole people, the power rests wholly in their hands, and is distributed among individuals. Having no cohesion, and no center of power, democracies soon fall in pieces. How different from the figure employed in the New Testament in setting forth the principle we are discussing—the human body, with its various members, the vital organs, etc. These portions are not disconnected and separate, like the individual people in a pure democracy, but organized, and controlled by a central head. The blood is diffused from the heart through all the extremities, and then returns to the heart. Each member has its appropriate functions, but there are checks and counter-checks all through the body. No such things can be claimed for a pure democracy; it is only a collection of individu-

alities, discordant and disintegrating. Such is the unquestioned verdict of history.

But what form of civil government most fully recognizes the principle under consideration, so strikingly illustrated by the figure of the human body? *Ans.* A republican government like that of the United States.

In the republican government of the United States the power resides principally in the people. The popular phrase of President Lincoln, so often quoted with encomium, "A government of the people, for the people, and by the people," is not quite correct. The Republic of the United States is a government of the people, for the people, *by representatives* of the people.

Originating with the people, the power rises through distinct lines of ascent to the Congress and the President, and then, through enactments and appointees to office, returns again to the people. To specify: we have first governors, State legislatures, representatives in Congress, and a president and vice-president elected by the people. Then, we have United States sena-

tors elected by the legislatures. The power, starting with the people, concentrates in Congress and the president, the federal head of the government of the United States. From this point the power returns again to the people, by the members of the cabinet, the judges of the Supreme Court and of the District Courts, the United States marshals, the collectors of ports, the officers of the revenue, the postmasters, and the army and navy officers—all appointed by the president and Congress, or by the heads of departments whom they have appointed. Along all the way of ascent and descent there are checks and counter-checks, in the form of legal or constitutional limitations. Some links may be wanting, but they are being gradually supplied by national and State legislation, year by year. No other government so fully meets the conditions of St. Paul's illustration.

THIS PRINCIPLE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE CHURCH.

It is *the life principle* of the Church. It is opposed to caste and selfish exclusiveness in the

Church. If true to the spirit of her Founder, no invidious distinctions will be recognized. It is also opposed to the spirit of excessive denominationalism and exclusive sectarianism. The narrow assumption sometimes indulged by conceited bigots, that their denomination is *the Church* of Christ, is a gross offense. To exclude from the Lord's table Christian men and women because they have not been baptized according to a specific denominational form is also an offense to the body of Christ.

This principle is also opposed to schisms. Different denominations do not necessarily imply schisms. The New Testament doctrine of schism is heart-division among Christians, and that may exist in the same denomination, and in a local church or society, without any open rupture.

This principle is the basis of Christian fellowship; it sweetens the communion of saints; it begets kindly attention to those united with us in Christ; it hallows and makes precious our Church relations; and it makes the Church a

comfort and a blessing. It is the basis of mutual forbearance, mutual esteem, mutual joys and sorrows. It prompts to kindly interest in those members of Christ's body who are sick, or bereaved, or unfortunate. It is the basis of mutual burden-bearing in the Church, prompting us to cheerfully share the expenses, the labors, the offices, and responsibilities of the Church. It is also the basis of our joint-heirship with Christ. If we would jointly inherit, we must be joint members in the same body.

A principle so fundamental to the spiritual life should be recognized in *the politics* of Churches. If civil polities should be founded upon it, so also should ecclesiastical polities.

In Church government there are two extremes, corresponding to absolutism and democracy in civil government. Ecclesiastical absolutism is represented by the Church of Rome. In that Church the power is lodged in the pope, from whom it descends through cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests to the

people; but no power rises from the people to any priest, bishop, or any other official.

The Churches of the Congregational polity, Baptists, Unitarians, Universalists, and largely, also, the Presbyterians, correspond to the democracy of civil government. In respect to polity, there is but little difference among them. They are pure democracies. The Presbyterians vary a little, and but little. The orthodox Congregational denomination in the United States is not one national Church, but an aggregate of Churches. Their State associations are associations of Congregational Churches. The same thing is true of the Baptists, Unitarians, etc. Each local body is a church in the fullest sense, holding no organic connection with any other local church—only brotherly relations. Each local church holds the supreme power of legislation and discipline within itself. No other church or collection of churches, even of the same denomination, can do any thing more than give advice. Councils called for settling and dismissing ministers are only advisory, and their

advice may be disregarded without any ecclesiastical penalty. It would, however, make them liable to be considered as wanting in proper respect for sister churches — a violation of the principles of the communion of churches, not a question of ecclesiastical law, but of Christian courtesy.

In these churches the pastor has absolutely no power. If he presides at a church meeting, it is not by right, but by courtesy. Any layman can as well preside, and often does preside, being chosen instead of the pastor. Even in case of discipline the pastor has no power. He can only act an advisory part, like any other member. As local churches, they are a collection of individuals, with no organic unity, no cementing bond, no conserving link. Churches thus constituted fail to meet the conditions of the figure used by St. Paul—the human body—for there is no union of individual members in one common system.

Another element of weakness in churches of the Congregational polity is that the church

divides its voice with the congregation or parish. Said Rev. Dr. Hawes,* of Hartford:

"These two bodies are in some respects united and one, but in others are distinct, independent corporations. In the call and settlement of a minister, which is the great business they have to transact together, each exerts a separate and uncontrolled agency. And yet the concurrence of each is indispensable to the validity of their respective acts. The church has no power to place a minister over the congregation; nor has the congregation power to place a minister over the church. In effecting the settlement of a pastor, the concurrent voice of the church and society is essential."

Under such a system the power, instead of being concentrated, is scattered. The congregation can withhold its concurrence, as has often been the case, and so compel the church to elect whom it chooses as its pastor. So much for the boasted "free election of the brethren." The power to defeat the church is in the

* *Tribute to the Memory of the Pilgrims*, p. 58.

hands of irreligious men not members of the church.

Furthermore, this society, a corporation distinct from the church, holds all the church property, determines the salary of the pastor, etc., and is responsible by law for the raising and paying of the salary. The church, therefore, sustains a subordinate and dependent part in this important business. So far has this matter been carried that the question has sometimes been discussed,* whether the church should have the precedence of the society, or the society the precedence of the church.

We come now to consider,

How the Principle under Consideration Enters into the Polity of Methodism.

1. As to its general organic features.

We have seen that the denominations of the Congregational polity are aggregates of denominational individualities; but the Methodist Episcopal Church is a denominational unit. It is

* Professor Upham, *Ratio Disciplinæ.*

not a local society, but it comprises all the local societies throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, wherever it has ministers and societies. The Methodist Episcopal Church has fifteen mission Conferences outside of the United States: six in Europe, one in Africa, one in Mexico, one in South America, one in Japan, two in India, and three in China. It takes all her members, all over the world, to make one Church. Each local body is a society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. These societies are linked together by connectional bonds. Under the presiding elder, from twenty to sixty or more societies are united in a district, through which that official travels four times each year. Several of these presiding elders' districts are united in one Annual Conference, and one hundred and twenty of these Annual Conferences are under one General Conference. The Methodist Episcopal Church is not a confederacy of one hundred and twenty Annual Conferences, not a mere association of, say, twenty thousand societies. It is a single body

of which these societies and Conferences are component parts, and all "members one of another."

This bond of connection is carried out by bishops, who, as general superintendents, travel through the whole Church, administering its affairs, and sustaining the same relation to every member; by four hundred and ninety-eight presiding elders, traveling through their districts; by pastors, liable to be appointed to any society; by the Book Concern's books and periodicals; by the great benevolent societies and their secretaries, reaching out into the whole body. The bishops have ever been a strong bond of union to the Church. They are not confined to any diocese. As general superintendents, they travel every-where, and acquaint themselves with the needs of every portion of the Church. Their fields of labor are interchanging every year, first in one section, then in another, so that each one belongs to the whole Church. Each bishop is strictly amenable to the General Conference for his conduct and his administration; and every minister and

every lay member has a right to bring any bishop to trial before the General Conference. Such is the connectional unity of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

But let us look a little further. There are many persons who think our Church polity is very undemocratic. Undemocratic it is, in some respects, and none the worse for that, but rather better; for a pure democracy is a very weak government, whether in state or Church.

Our nation is not, as we have already noticed, a democracy, but a republic, in which the democratic principle is largely incorporated, but supplemented by the representative and the federal principle, to which it is indebted for whatever strength and efficiency it possesses. The doctrine of State rights or State sovereignty, out of which the nullification heresy and our late civil war sprang, directly antagonizes the federal principle, and logically leads into the weakness and disintegration of an irresponsible democracy. Our best statesmen are fully impressed with this truth, and the necessity of guarding

and strengthening the federal element in the civil polity of the republic. Out of what did the federal element in the government of the United States spring? Out of the necessity of a stronger government than the Confederation which preceded it. Under that, public affairs were in a condition bordering upon chaos. The imperiled state of the country was viewed with alarm by the best and wisest patriots who had struggled with the issues of the Revolution. The great speech of Hon. Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, in the convention that framed the Constitution, disclosed the weaknesses and defects of a government without a federal bond, and the elements of power which it imparts. A federal bond implies a concentration of power in a responsible center. Men may say that they do not believe in centralization of power. But there is no power without concentration. All nature and common life are full of illustrations of the fact.

Does any persist in saying that the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is

very unlike the government of the United States? If we look closely, we shall see that there is no Church polity which more nearly corresponds to that of the United States government than our own. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Annual Conferences correspond very largely, though not fully, to the State legislatures, and the General Conference corresponds to Congress. The Annual Conference is composed of ministers, and the General Conference, the legislative body of the Church, of ministers and laymen. The analogy between our Annual Conferences and the State legislatures fails at some points; but a similar defect or discrepancy may be seen in all the subordinate associations, conferences, presbyteries, or other local bodies of all the religious denominations, and they are believed to be peculiar to the necessities of ecclesiastical life, which require less local legislation than the State.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the power starts from the laity. No man can become an exhorter unless first recommended by the laity,

either the class of which he is a member, or the leaders and stewards' meeting. No man is licensed to preach unless first recommended by the leaders and stewards' meeting, which is composed wholly of laymen, except the pastor, who presides; and then the candidate must receive the votes of the Quarterly Conference, which is seldom composed of more than one minister, and from ten to thirty laymen. If this man, thus constituted a local preacher, desires to become an itinerant preacher or a member of an Annual Conference, he must come a fourth time before the laity. The Quarterly Conference, composed, as we have seen, of laymen, must recommend him to the Annual Conference. He can reach the door of the Annual Conference in no other way. Thus, among us, the laity decide the question who shall be the ministers. Among the Congregationalists and the Baptists, the Association, composed wholly of ministers, grants licenses to preach; among the Presbyterians, the presbytery, composed equally of ministers and elders—the latter, laymen.

While with us the pastoral office is reached by four successive steps, each of which is watched over by the laity and must be sanctioned by their formally expressed will, with churches of the Congregational polity the laity are not consulted at all, until the question comes up as to whether a given minister, who has been made a minister independently of them, shall be their pastor. Deny these churches the privilege of electing a pastor and they would be in a condition pitiably helpless, vastly inferior to that of our churches. With us the laity speak four times before the laity with them speak once. Besides, our churches are uniformly consulted in the selection of their pastors; and yet we are told that our churches have no voice in electing ministers. But Congregational churches are never consulted at all until they come to settle a minister.

Next, the ministers who compose the Annual Conferences every four years elect ministerial delegates to the General Conference, just as our legislatures elect the senators in Congress. At

the same time, an Electoral Conference of laymen, made up of delegates chosen by the Quarterly Conferences, meets and elects lay delegates to the General Conference. The General Conference, thus constituted, elects the bishops. Thus we see the power, starting with the people, rising up through several gradations, with checks and counter-checks, to the General Conference. But it should be remembered that the bishops are not above the General Conference, but subject to it.

The General Conference is the head from which the power returns again to the people. First, the General Conference elects the bishops, and gives them all their power. They can do only what the General Conference says, and they are amenable to the General Conference. Their conduct and administration are scrutinized, censured, or approved every four years. The General Conference also elects the editors, and the secretaries of the Missionary, Sunday-School, Tract, Church Extension, and Freedmen's Aid Societies, who, with the bishops,

come in contact with the people of every section of the Church. The bishops appoint the presiding elders, who visit and superintend the twenty, thirty, and sixty societies of their districts, and, in connection with the bishops, arrange and fix the appointments of the preachers. The preachers appoint the class-leaders, and nominate the stewards and trustees.* Thus we see that the power which originates with the people rises through successive gradations, with checks and counter-checks, to the General Conference, from which it returns to the people, just as in the government of the United States the power travels from the people upward to the Congress and president, and returns again to the people. As in the national government there are yet some missing links in

* In several States the laity alone nominate and elect trustees. In New York, all who statedly contribute to the support of the churches (even though not Church members). are entitled to take part in the election of trustees. And this is in accordance with our Discipline, which provides that whenever any State specifies any particular method of electing trustees our societies must conform to it.

the chain, so in the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Is it said that the Quarterly Conferences are close corporations, and self-perpetuating, and the nominations of stewards and trustees dependent upon the pastor? In reply, I ask, Do we not find similar close corporations, under due provision of law, too, in all our States? The analogy, therefore, does not fail.

But is it said that our economy does not sufficiently admit the laity to a voice in the affairs of the Church? We have before shown that they have several important advantages over other denominations, and they are constantly gaining others. Our Church legislation is, in every quadrennium, supplying something in that direction. Once, a minister, on his sole prerogative, could turn out a member from the Church, but now every member has a right to a trial before his peers before he can be expelled, and can be expelled only on their verdict; and he can object to any juror who sits on his case, as in civil courts. Once, a minister had the full

right to appoint a board of trustees and fill vacancies; at a later date, trustees filled the vacancies on the nomination of the pastor; now the whole Quarterly Conference, composed, as we have seen, almost wholly of laymen, votes on the election of trustees, and also of stewards. Such is the tendency of legislation in our Church to supply the missing links and recognize the popular voice. In the year 1872 laymen were introduced into the General Conference—the great legislative body of the Church. As to the appointment of class-leaders by the pastor—when it is duly considered how intimately these officers are associated with the pastor in the spiritual work of the Church few will be disposed to take from him the right of their appointment.

It must be admitted that, *even with some of the links yet wanting*, the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, viewed *as a whole*, *more nearly corresponds* to the government of the United States than *that of any other Church.*

In the language of our bishops, in their Address to the General Conference of 1876, "The connectional character of our Church we regard as of the highest inportance and greatest utility. An army in detachments, under independent authorities, would be feeble and ineffective in comparison with the same army moved by one supreme authority, having unity of purpose and action. Germany under the Empire is much more potential among the nations of the earth than when under the government of independent sovereignties. So the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the sublime unity of her grand purpose, and under the government and direction of the General Conference, as her supreme authority, is much mightier in her action and influence than she could possibly be in independent divisions. She can better antagonize great errors, contend with enormous vices, overthrow combinations of wickedness, and press forward the triumphs of divine truth and grace in the earth."

As to the Itinerancy.

Some seem to think that the itinerancy of the Methodist Episcopal Church is opposed to the principle under consideration. If we study the itinerancy we shall see that it is founded directly upon the principle that we are "members one of another." The itinerancy has reference to the assignment of the preachers to their ministerial and pastoral work. It was constituted on the basis of the surrender of personal rights and preferences. Under this system, at the outset, the preacher relinquishes the right of absolutely deciding as to his field of labor, and the societies also surrender the right of absolutely deciding who shall be their pastor. This does not mean that there can be no consultation between the preachers and the people, nor between the preachers or the people and the bishop or presiding elder. By no means. This has always been not only allowable, but also necessary, in ascertaining the needs of all concerned. But the *fixing* of the appointment is with the bishop.

The Discipline defines the duty of the bishop in these words: "To fix the appointment of the preachers." He must judge between conflicting claims, and finally determine the allotment. This all good Methodists submit to gracefully.

The reason for this surrender of personal rights is for the good of the whole, that *every society may have a pastor, and every pastor a society.* If the matter were left to be decided by personal agreement of pastors with societies, a large number of societies would be left without pastors, and pastors without societies (as in churches of the Congregational polity), to the detriment of each party, and of the Church as a whole.

But we are asked if, under our present economy, there is not a large number of societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church without pastors? We answer No; not one. Those noticed in the Minutes as left *to be supplied* are all of them provided with pastors. Every society whose name is on the list in the Minutes has a pastor. Some are feeble societies, which do not

feel able pecuniarily to take the responsibility of supporting a minister from the Conference, and desire some kind of a supply suited to their financial situation. If the society cannot be furnished with a pastor who is a member of the Conference, it is left under the care of the presiding elder, who provides one. Usually he has some one already provided, he having, in his oversight of the societies, anticipated the case, and arranged with some local or supernumerary preacher to take the charge, so that these societies are as promptly and regularly provided with pastors as others which receive ministers from the Conference. Preachers thus appointed by the presiding elder are as truly pastors as though appointed at the Conference. In case a few days or weeks should ever intervene between pastors, on account of death or otherwise, the pastorate is vested in the presiding elder, who gives special attention to the society until he can furnish a pastor to dwell among them, which is seldom more than a few weeks.

Thus all Methodist societies have *a perpetual*

pastorate. If one pastor leaves, another immediately steps into his place. While, therefore, we have not, in the technical sense, "settled pastors," we have, nevertheless, *a permanent pastorate.* No denomination but the Methodist has a perpetual pastorate. It is a great advantage to both pastors and people.

Hence it appears that what men of other denominations have said to their own credit, and to the discredit of Methodism, in regard to the permanency of their pastoral relation, has been full of misapprehension as to the facts, or unfortunate in phraseology, or both. The itinerant ministry is permanent, unceasing. It never vacates, never intermits. The very act and moment that dissolves a minister's pastoral relation to one society places him in the same relation to another society. The societies are never without pastors, nor the pastors without societies.

One thing to us seems palpable:

If the Methodist Episcopal Church should abandon the itinerancy and adopt

the Congregational polity of settling ministers, in less than five years one half of our churches would be without pastors.

Let us see how it is with the churches of the Congregational polity. Turning first to the Baptist churches, we find that their Year-Book does not give the necessary data to determine the question of the number of settled pastors in the whole country; but the local "Minutes" for the several New England States enable us to ascertain the facts for that section, though the case in regard to some of their churches is not quite clear, some who are only supplies not being distinctly designated.

Vacant Baptist Churches in New England in 1880.

	Number of Churches.	Churches vacant.	Per cent. vacant.
Maine.....	262	113	43
New Hampshire....	84	22	26
Vermont.....	114	37	32
Massachusetts.....	289	61	21
Rhode Island *.....	..	..	..
Connecticut.....	119	20	17
Total.....	868	253	29

* Not designated.

Of 868 churches, 253, or 29 per cent., were without pastors. In Maine, the vacant churches were 43 per cent. of the whole, and in Vermont 32 per cent.

Passing to the "orthodox Congregationalists," let us first notice what one of their own writers says:

"Take the stronghold of Congregationalism, Massachusetts, for a little survey. In 1857 the number of churches in Massachusetts was four hundred and forty-four; *sixty with ministers not installed*, and *forty-two not supplied.* In 1867 the number of churches was four hundred and ninety-six; *one hundred and fourteen with ministers not installed*, and *eighty-seven not supplied.* The number of ministers not installed was nearly double in ten years, while the increase in the number of churches not supplied nearly equaled the increase in the whole number of churches. In 1877 the number of churches was five hundred and twenty-six; *one hundred and seventy-four with ministers not installed*, and *seventy-three without*

supply. In the last ten years the number of churches increases by thirty; the number with ministers not installed increases by sixty, and the number without supply decreases by fourteen. For the last twenty years the number of churches increases by eighty-two, or an average of about four per year; the number with ministers not installed increases nearly threefold, or from sixty to one hundred and seventy-four, or on an average nearly six a year; and the number not supplied also increases on an average of nearly two a year, or from forty-two to seventy-three. (Massachusetts and Connecticut are the only States reporting more ministers installed than uninstalled.) The two States reporting the next largest number of churches are New York and Illinois. In New York, of two hundred and fifty-nine churches, only fifty-nine, and in Illinois, of two hundred and forty-two churches, only twenty six, have ministers installed. Iowa reports two hundred and twenty-five churches, with only seventeen ministers installed. The whole number of churches in the country is

3,564. Of these 2,693 are regularly supplied, but 1,795 of the ministers supplying are uninstalled. '*Tempora mutantur, mores mutantur.*'

"Twenty years ago a leading and lively writer in our *Quarterly* made the following statements:

"'Few men of middle age are now in their first pastorates. A few Sabbaths of preaching seminary sermons, a hasty vote, a council obliged to concur—this is the settlement; a few months of novelty, gradually waning to indifference, a a few years of sameness, a restiveness on the part of minister or people, a difficulty through some troubler in Israel—this is the tenure; then a request for dismission on the ground of "ill health," a council to indorse the minister as an angel and the people as saints, condolence with the church in its "great loss," a separation—and this is the end.' 'Such,' he adds, 'are the majority of our pastorates.' If that were true, making allowance for rhetorical and quizzical features of statement, before the war, it cannot be less so now. There are more reasons for

this state of things than we are now called upon to canvass, but the facts are significant." *

Taking a broader and longer survey of this denomination, we find that until within a comparatively brief period, say sixty years, their churches were well supplied with pastors. In 1770, in Massachusetts, there were 294 Congregational churches, of which only 15, or about 5 per cent., were without settled pastors. In those days ministers were settled for life, and there was a complete union of Church and State.

With considerable research we have been able to gather data covering several periods, showing the drift in the Congregational churches.

In New England.

	Churches.	Settled Pastors.	Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
1830.—Maine	157	104	...	53
New Hampshire	146	116	...	30
Vermont	203	110	17	76
Massachusetts	227	208	...	19
Rhode Island †	16	10	5	1
Connecticut	223	183	...	40
Total New England	972	731	22‡	219

* Rev. H. E. Barnes, in the *Congregational Quarterly*, 1878, pp. 610, 611. † For 1845, earlier cannot be obtained.

‡ Probably some vacant churches had stated supplies.

	Churches.	Settled Pastors.	Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
1870.—Total New England	1,442	671	444	327
1880.—Total New England	1,472	620	544	308
1886.—Maine	244	54	94	96
New Hampshire	188	67	70	51
Vermont	198	55	95	48
Massachusetts	536	277	189	70
Rhode Island	28	16	11	
Connecticut	297	138	125	34
Total New England	1,491	607	584	300

PERCENTAGE OF THE FOREGOING CHURCHES WITH SETTLED PASTORS, STATED SUPPLIES, AND VACANT.

	Settled Pastors.	Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
1830	75 per cent.	....*	24 per cent.
1870	47 "	31 per cent.	23 "
1880	42 "	37 "	21 "
1886	41 "	39 "	20 "

From the foregoing tables it is evident that the Congregational churches, even in their stronghold, New England, are gradually loosing their "settled" ministry, the churches with pastors having decreased from 95 per cent. of the whole number in 1770 to 75 per cent. in 1830, 47 per cent. in 1870, and 41 per cent. in 1886: a little more than one fifth are vacant, and more than one third have stated supplies.

* Too small a number to be calculated.

Turning to the whole country we find the following exhibit, covering a period of twenty-nine years:

Congregational (Orthodox) Pastorate in the United States.

	Churches.	With Pastors.	With Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
1857.....	2,315	947	592*	503*
1860.....	2,583	898	694*	537*
1870.....	3,121	903	1,438	780
1880.....	3,745	881	1,919	945
1882.....	3,936	927	1,986	1,023
1886.....	4,277	967	2,218	1,092

Percentage on Above.

	With Pastors.	With Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
1857.....	41 per cent.	25 per cent.	21 per cent.
1860.....	34 "	27 "	21 "
1870.....	29 "	46 "	25 "
1880.....	24 "	51 "	25 "
1882.....	24 "	50 "	26 "
1886.....	22.5 "	52 "	25.5 "

While the total number of churches has increased 1,962, the settled pastors have increased from 947 to 967; a relative decrease from 41 per cent. of the whole number to 22.5 per cent.

*In some churches, in these years, these items were not specified, the statistics in those years being less full and accurate than in later years.

The stated supplies increased from 592 to 2,218, or from 25 per cent. of the whole number to 52 per cent., and the churches wholly vacant increased from 503 to 1,092, or from 21 per cent. to 25.5 per cent. of all the churches.

Outside of New England, the supply of pastors for the Congregational Church is very small, as will be seen by the following table for 1886:

ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

	Churches.	Pastors.	Stated Supplies.	Vacant Churches.
United States.....	4,277	967	2,218	1,092
New England.....	1,491	607	584	300
Outside of New England..	2,786	360	1,634	792

In the United States, outside of New England, only 13 per cent. of the Congregational churches have pastors, 58+ per cent. have stated supplies, and 28+ per cent. are vacant.

We have also data for several other denominations, some for 1885 and others for 1886, though in three of them there is no discrimination between stated supplies and pastors in their Year-Books.

	Churches or Parishes.	Pastors.	Stated Supplies.	Vacant.
Presbyterian Church.....	6,093	2,536	2,352	1,141
Southern Presb. Church..	2,159	749	806	604
United Presb. Ch. of N. A.	868	(624)		244
Universalist.....	934	....	....	418
Unitarian.....	356	....	....	76

Percentage on Above.

Presbyterian Church.....	42 p. ct.	35 p. ct.	23 p. ct.
Southern Presbyterian Church..	35 "	37 "	28 "
United Presb. Church of N. A..	....	....	27 "
Universalist.....	....	....	45 "
Unitarian.....	....	....	22 "

Of late the question has been discussed among our Congregational brethren whether the installation of pastors should be considered essential to the Congregational polity. This was the topic of an able article in the *Congregational Quarterly*, in October, 1878. The writer discussed the question of principles and also of facts. He answered "the main question plumply in the affirmative." He said: "Theoretically and historically the installation of pastors is a constituent part of the Congregational polity." "Not ten years ago, Connecticut Congregationalism declared in grave speech and graver document that no uninstalled minister was a pastor, or

could properly be a member of a council." But the writer thinks the logic of events seems to be answering this question in the negative.

The same writer says: "For a long time, the view was held and acted upon that a man was not a minister unless he was a pastor in charge of a church. For more than one hundred years of our history, moreover, ordination always meant what installation now does. None were ordained 'to the ministry,' but *over* churches." His conclusion is stated in these words, "From leading facts and principles, then, it would seem that the installation of pastors is a constituent element of the Congregational polity."

It is evident that the Congregational polity, as a system, fails, if it does not furnish pastors for the churches. The *Congregationalist* for January 9, 1868, in an editorial article in regard to stated supplies, said:

"Of late years, an effort has been made to make the relation sound more Congregational, by styling those who hold it 'acting pastors.' It is clear to careful reflection upon the funda-

mental principles of our system, that Congregationalism recognizes no such church officers as having any place among the regular forces of her laborers. One of her cardinal doctrines is that there are only two grades of regular church officers—pastors and deacons—known to Scripture. But a stated supply is not a deacon; equally, he is not a pastor; because the Church has neither chosen him nor ordained him to be such. In a great many instances, as the thing works now, *the Church, as such, has taken no vote upon the matter*, and *has no official cognizance of the man at all;* the engagement by which the supply is made 'stated,' instead of for a Sabbath or two, *having been made by the parish committee*, without so much as saying to the Church, 'By your leave.'"

In reply to the inquiry whether Congregationalism is not a system of common sense, under which provision is made for such exigencies, the editor further says:

"Yes, but the radical and ineradicable difference between her theory of the whole matter

and that of the system of stated supplies is that she regards no church, strong or weak, as in its normal condition without a pastor. Therefore she recognizes all other occupation of its pulpit as purely and necessarily exceptional and temporary; as simply a bridge over a lamented chasm. . . . The theory that it is right and wise for churches, because they are weak, or because they are peculiarly situated, or because they cannot quite find the man whom they are willing to settle, or for any other reason, to hire preachers by the year, as farmers do farm laborers, she utterly repudiates. . . . We could mention towns in New England where the preaching of an orthodox Congregational pulpit has been thus *for years controlled by the parish committee*, who have made all bargains with their 'stated supplies,' and all selections of them, the *Church* meanwhile having *no direct cognizance* of the matter at all."

The practical effect of so many churches being without pastors is very bad. They often remain many months, and even some years, in

this condition. No church, however strong, will be exempt from serious losses, besides failing to make progress. The writer already quoted (an editorial writer) says:

"A few years of such experiences are very apt to sink a church so low in its essential life that it is almost impossible for it to have more than a name to live (if it retain even that)."

Again:

"We believe the feeblest church of Christ, west or east, new or old, should seek to have a pastor. That is God's way. The feebler it is the more it needs a pastor. Let them take one of their own humble members, if they can get none better qualified; but let them have a pastor who shall dwell among them and make their interests his own. Happy will be the day for the churches when these ill-omened letters, 'S. S.' and 'A. P.,' shall disappear from all our statistics."

Such is the testimony of an eminent Congregational editor.

Thus we have, on the one hand, Methodist

societies fostered by a perpetual pastorate, and, on the other hand, denominations of the Congregational polity with a large percentage of their churches suffering from the want of pastors. What is the effect on the growth of these churches? I will give the statistics as gathered from the official sources of each.

The following table gives the number of the communicants:

CHURCHES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL POLITY.

	1800.	1880.	Gain.
Baptists (all kinds).....	103,000	2,452,878	2,349,878
Congregationalists (orthodox)	75,000	384,332	309,332
Presbyterians (all kinds)....	40,000	937,640	897,640
Total.....	218,000	3,774,850	3,556,850

CHURCHES OF ITINERANT POLITY.

	1800.	1880.	Gain.
Methodists (all kinds of itinerant).....	64,894	3,669,932	3,605,038

Methodism, starting in 1800 with less than one third as many members as all kinds of Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists combined, has come to be nearly as numerous as all of them united, and her actual gain has been

48,188 more than theirs. The relative increase to the population of the country is full of significance.

Inhabitants of the United States to One Communicant.

Churches of the Congregational Polity.

	1800.	1880.	
Baptists (all kinds).....	51	20	
Congregationalists (orthodox).	71	131	—a relative decrease.
Presbyterians (all kinds).....	132	54	
Total, Churches of Congregational Polity.....	25	13	

Churches of Itinerant Polity.

	1800.	1880.
Methodists (all kinds).....	82	13

In 1800, the communicants of the churches of the Congregational polity were one twenty-fifth of the whole population of the country, while the communicants of the Methodist churches were one eighty-second part; but in 1880 the communicants of the former had become one thirteenth part of the whole population, and those of Methodism had also become one thirteenth part of it—a gain of twelve in the population in the former, and sixty-nine in the latter.

We need not pursue these statistics any further. We do not, however, presume that the superior growth of Methodism is due wholly to her peculiar polity, which furnishes a perpetual pastorate; but it is too palpable to need argument that this perpetual pastorate, continually fostering the societies, has been a very large and important factor in its rapid growth; and that the small number of pastors, ranging from 56 per cent. (Presbyterians) to 22.5 per cent. (Congregational), leaving from about one half to three fourths of the churches either vacant or with only temporary supplies, must be very disastrous to the growth of any Church.

The *Boston Journal*, May 21, 1881, in an editorial, speaks of the disadvantages of the Congregational polity, as follows:

"Our local columns have lately contained reports of the case of a church in one of our Massachusetts towns which has installed a pastor after *nine years'* ineffectual quest. *Two hundred and forty different candidates had*

been heard by the Church, and the final settlement was accomplished over the protests of a minority, which *broke up one council on the score of technicalities, and endeavored to prevent the action of the second.* What were the reasons which lay back of this extraordinary lack of harmony we do not seek to inquire, and it would be no kindness to rekindle controversies which we may hope to have been set finally at rest. But we may be allowed to use these circumstances as an illustration of a difficulty quite often encountered among churches with vacant pastorates—although not often manifested in so extreme and acute a form. We hardly know which is the more to be wondered at, in the case which we have mentioned—the *fastidiousness* of the church, or the endless succession of candidates, each as hopeful as his predecessor, who were willing to subject themselves to the critical scrutiny of a congregation, their chance of pleasing whom was about one in a thousand. . . . But this, serious as it is, is not the only evil that follows in the wake of this bad cus-

tom. It has a *demoralizing effect upon ministers*, who, by the necessities of their position, when they are seeking a settlement are tempted to consult popularity more than truth, and to preach what is palatable rather than what is profitable. No minister can be subjected to this sort of ordeal for any length of time without a distinct weakening of self-respect, and an uneasy sense of insincerity and unworthiness of motive. It serves further to deter young men from entering a profession the tenure in which is so hazardous."

Another fact appeared some years ago in the papers:

ITINERANCY. — The Congregational Church in Northampton, Mass., has had *twenty-nine* different clergymen since July, 1855 (about two and a half years), *seventeen* of whom were *invited* by the "*committee*," with the expectation of being "candidates for the vacancy." It is a large and wealthy church. This is rather more of "itinerancy" than even the Methodists contend for.

Another paper had the following:

"Bishop Paddock, of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, in his recent charge to his clergy, said that 'pastoral changes are growing frequent. About *one* Episcopal minister in *five* is unsettled, and they change almost as fast as the Methodists.'"

The *Congregationalist* says:

"The same is too true with us, although we think there are signs of improvement. Somebody once said, sensibly: 'Four ministers out of five who resign do not need to, if they would realize it.'"

Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Episcopalians have felt the disadvantages of their system. Prof. Tucker, of Andover Theological Seminary, presented before a recent session of the National Council of the Congregational Churches a paper upon the difficult question, how acting pastors or stated supplies could be recognized and invested with fuller powers, and brought into closer official relations with the churches they serve. The fact that the stated,

supplies in his denomination are two and a fourth times as many as the pastors, with a continual increase in that direction, seems to necessitate some such action. The precise piece of ecclesiastical mechanism that will fit the case has not yet, however, been discovered.

In the Presbyterian Church, the committee on the "Pastoral Relation," in the report to the General Assembly, in May, 1881, after deploring the number of *vacant* churches, among other causes of their being in that condition specifies the following: "A want of system in bringing those who are able and willing to work and the vacant churches together." To meet this need the committee recommend the following plan: A committee in each presbytery, to prepare a list of the vacant churches and the unemployed ministers, "who shall send" the ministers to the vacant churches; and that all unemployed ministers, able for service, who refuse to be placed on the list, and work under the direction of the presbytery, if not excused, be retired, and so reported to the General Assem-

bly.* This plan approaches very nearly to the system under which the Methodist presiding elders work.

But this persistent seeking of one's own selfish preferences in the settlement of a pastor not only results in the general disadvantage of leaving many churches without a pastor to suffer and to decline, but it often produces unhallowed and pernicious agitations. The choice of a new pastor often imperils the well-being of a church. Divisions and distractions spring up. Said Rev. John Angell James: †

"It must be admitted that, on these occasions, our principles as Independents and our practices as Christians have not unfrequently been brought into disrepute. We have been accused of wrangling about a *teacher* of religion till we have lost all our religion in the affray; and the state of many congregations proves that the charge is not altogether without foundation."

* *Minutes of General Assembly*, 1881, p. 547.

† *Church Members' Guide*, p. 165.

Again he says: "We carry into the sanctuary and into the church our pride, our self-will, our personal taste. That spirit of mutual submission, brotherly love, and surrender of our own gratification to the good of others which the word of God enjoins and our profession avows would keep the Church always happy and harmonious, and enable it to pass in safety through the most critical circumstances in which it can be placed. Instead of seeking the good of the whole, the feelings of too many of our members may be thus summarily expressed—'*I will have my own way.*'"

Our itinerant polity, properly worked, will insure against these evils. The spirit which Mr. James recommends as the remedy for the evils incident to the Congregational polity—mutual submission, the surrender of personal preferences to the greatest good—is the basis of our itinerancy. Both ministers and societies with us waive personal choices, in order that the great ends for which the Church is founded may be more fully accomplished.

Is it objected that, under the itinerant polity, churches sometimes receive undesirable ministers? I reply, Do not churches which call and settle their ministers often find themselves mistaken in their choice, and burdened with an undesirable minister whom they cannot easily get rid of? But if a Methodist society gets an undesirable minister, is it not better thus than to be left a year, possibly several years, without any pastor; and can it not, for the general good, be patiently borne for a year, when exchange can be easily effected?

It is also true that a Methodist minister will sometimes have an undesirable pastorate; but that is not so bad as to have no place, and to be obliged to go about the country exhibiting himself and seeking a call. He will certainly bear it, if he be a true servant of God, when he considers it part of an administration for the general good.

Length of Pastorates.

Other denominations set up high claims to superior advantages on account of longer pas-

torates; and some inconsiderate Methodists are so impressed by these utterances that they are inclined to weaken in their attachment to our polity. They do not realize how few churches, under what is termed the "settled polity," have long pastorates. I ask attention to facts* often overlooked.

1. About one quarter of the Congregational churches are reported as *vacant*, having no pastors, and must, therefore, be counted out altogether.

2. About one half of all their churches have only "stated supplies," usually hired from one year to another, so that they also must be counted out, when the supposed advantages of long pastorates are to be considered. This makes three fourths of all their churches to be excluded.

3. Only one quarter, therefore, of the Con-

* As deduced from the statistics of the Congregational churches of New England. The Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and the Baptists, except in the State reports for Massachusetts and Vermont, do not give the dates at which the pastorates begin.

gregational churches can enter at all into the question of the advantages of long pastorates. These facts narrow the scope of the question, and greatly minify the supposed advantages.

4. But how is it with this quarter of the Congregational churches which had "settled" pastors? How many of them had long pastorates? We are able to give an exact answer, based upon the table which immediately follows this paragraph. It was prepared some years ago, and gives the length of time each pastor had been in his pastorate at the time the table was made up. And it is for New England, where the Congregational pastorates are longer than elsewhere. An inspection of the table will show, of 682 Congregational pastors:

5	of	50	years	and	over.
9	"	40	to 50	years.	
21	"	30	" 40	"	
47	"	20	" 30	"	
119	"	10	" 20	"	

Of 281 Baptist pastors in Massachusetts and Vermont:

1	from	40	to 50	years.	
2	"	30	" 40	"	
4	"	20	" 30	"	
11	"	10	" 20	"	

Combining the Congregationalist and Baptist pastors, just given, we have only 9 per cent. of all the churches with pastors that had the same pastors twenty years and upward; only 13 per cent. had the same pastors from ten to twenty years. But one half of all the Congregational pastors, and three fourths of all the Baptist pastors, had been only three years or less than three years in their pastorates. All this, after reckoning out about three quarters of the churches, which either have no pastors or only have stated supplies. Combining all the churches with and without pastors, we find that only 5 per cent. had pastors twenty years and upward, and only 7 per cent. from ten to twenty years. A clear case of *reductio ad minimum.*

It will be seen that the States with the longest average pastorates are New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Fifteen long pastorates in Massachusetts, exceeding fifty years each, swell the average very considerably and count against very many short ones.

IN NEW ENGLAND.

Average Length of Settled Pastorates*

Pastors which have been settled.	Congregational Pastors.						Baptist Pastors.	
	Maine	N. H.	Vt.	Mass.	R. I.	Conn.	Mass.†	Vt.†
50 years and over	..	..	..	5	..	..	..	..
40 to 50 years	2	2	1	3	..	1	..	1
30 to 40 "	2	2	2	7	2	6	1	1
20 to 30 "	2	7	8	25	1	4	2	2
10 to 20 "	9	11	8	61	1	29	16	5
9 years	5	..	..	10	..	9	1	..
8 "	..	2	2	6	1	8	3	1
7 "	6	8	10	16	..	4	..	3
6 "	1	6	3	10	..	6	3	2
5 "	2	..	6	5	..	6	10	3
4 "	..	6	2	18	..	3	21	2
3 "	9	7	11	28	..	13	16	7
2 "	7	11	6	28	2	16	36	11
1 "	17	16	13	33	2	30	38	19
Less than 1 year	4	11	10	41	2	28	61	20
Total	67	68	82	295	12	158	207	74
Average term of years	7½	10	7	9	10	7	3¼	4½

Average, 8⅓ years in all New England.

Number 3 years or less	37	45	38	130	6	87	151	57
Per cent. 3 years and less	.55	.66	.46	.44	.50	.55	.75	.77

Fifty per cent. of all the Congregational pastors in New England, 3 years or less; and 75 per cent. of the Baptist pastors in Massachusetts and Vermont, 3 years or less.

* Stated supplies are not included in this table.

† Unable to get data from other States for the Baptists.

But this subject should be examined more widely and discriminatingly. The preceding table had reference to New England exclusively, and also to "settled" pastors only. Two more tables are needed, one giving the "stated supplies" in the whole country, and the other combining the "stated supplies" with the "settled" pastors in the whole United States. The latter will be given because the two classes are constantly becoming less distinct. First we have:

LENGTH OF STATED SUPPLIES.

	Number of Stated Supplies.	Total Years of Supply.	Average Years for Each.
In New England	610	1,948	3.2
In Middle States	161	409	2.5
In rest of United States	1,215	3,116	2.5
Total for United States	1,986	5,473	2.8

This table was collated from the Congregational Year-Book for 1883, and shows an average of 2.8 years for each in the whole country, and this class constitute two thirds of all the pastors of their churches.

The next table, from the Year-Book for

1887, will help to a still clearer analysis of the case.

There are so many random and indefinite statements in regard to this subject, and so little has ever been given to the public in an exact form, that it seems desirable to treat the subject more fully. It will be done in no spirit of invidiousness, but because every Church polity is open to investigation, and should be tested by critical inquiry. We should all earnestly seek to know what form of polity best promotes the advancement of Christ's kingdom. For ourselves, we believe the old life-long pastorates were not conducive to the best life of the churches, and rejoice in the manifest tendency to shorten the term of ministerial service. Methodist itinerancy has doubtless been a great factor in abbreviating the pastorates of our sister denomination; and their greater growth, in the later periods, is one of the good results. We therefore follow up these critical inquiries a little further, in the hope of doing good service to the common cause.

LENGTH OF CONGREGATIONAL PASTORATES IN THE WHOLE UNITED STATES.

"SETTLED" PASTORS AND "STATED SUPPLIES" COMBINED.

Reckoned from the commencement of service, in each church, to January 1, 1887.*

LENGTH OF SERVICE	NEW ENGLAND.		MIDDLE STATES.†		OLD WEST. This side the Missouri.		NEW WEST.‡ Beyond the Missouri.		SOUTH.		TOTAL.	
	Pastors of both classes.	Total years of service.	Pastors of both classes.	Years of service.	Pastors of both classes.	Years of service.	Pastors of both classes.	Years of service.	Pastors of both classes.	Years of service.	Ministers.	Years of service.
50 years and over	..	..	..	..	1	62	..	..	..	..	1	62
40 to 50 years	7	320	1	40	2	83	..	..	..	..	10	443
30 " 40 "	18	639	3	107	3	93	1	31	..	..	25	870
20 " 30 "	41	954	4	87	13	322	2	47	..	..	60	1,450
10 " 20 "	120	1,700	23	311	57	872	21	276	9	116	230	3,275
9 years	23	207	5	45	11	99	3	27	1	9	43	387
8 "	30	240	2	16	12	96	7	56	4	32	55	440
7 "	34	238	6	42	15	105	9	63	3	21	67	469
6 "	62	372	10	60	21	126	14	84	4	24	111	666
5 "	57	285	13	65	30	150	16	80	13	65	129	645
4 "	77	308	4	52	46	184	32	128	10	40	169	712
3 "	120	360	29	87	81	243	58	174	10	30	298	894
2 "	155	310	43	86	123	246	103	206	24	48	448	896

1 year	226	226	49	49	218	21	166	166	27	27	686	686
6 months §	199	99½	61	30½	300	150	228	114	33	16½	821	410½
Total settled pastors and stated supplies	1,169	6,258½	253	1,077½	933	2,959	660	1,452	138	428½	3,153	12,174
Average years	5.5 years.		4 years.		3.2 years.		2.2 years.		3.1 yrs.		3.8 years.	
Average for settled pastors and stated supplies in the United States											3.8 years.	
Number 2 years and less	580	635½	153	165½	641	614	497	486	84	91½	1,955	1,992½
Per cent. 2 years and under	49 per cent.		60 per ct.		68 per ct.		75 per ct.		61 p. ct.		62 per cent.	
Average for those 2 years and under	1.09 years.		1.08 years.		.95 of a year.		.98 of a year.		1.09 years.		1.02 years.	

Sixty-two per cent. of all the Congregational pastors, including those settled and the stated supplies, have not been over 1.02 years in their present charges.

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* From the Congregational Year-Book for 1887.

† Including Maryland and District of Columbia.

‡ Minnesota is included in the New West.

§ All in 1886 are reckoned at six months.

From the foregoing table it appears that in the whole country the average term of service in the Congregational churches, for the settled pastors and the stated supplies, is 3.8 years. In New England it is 5.4 years; in the Middle States, 4 years; in the older West, 3.2 years; in the new West, 2.2 years; and in the South, 3.1 years. It also appears that only 10.3 per cent. exceed 10 years; 3.1 per cent. exceed 20 years, and only 7.4 per cent. range from 10 to 20 years. 26 per cent. of all these ministers have been less than one year in their present ministerial charges; 47 per cent. only one year or less; 62 per cent. two years or less; and 71 per cent. of the whole number three years or less. Sixty-two per cent. of the whole average 1.02 years in their present positions. It must be kept in mind that one quarter of all their churches do not enter into the foregoing calculations, having no pastors of either kind—vacant. We have carefully analyzed the churches with long pastorates with a view to determining whether long pastorates contribute to the greater growth

of the churches in membership. Here are the results:

	Pastorates of more than 20 years.	Pastorates of less than 20 years but more than 10 years.
Number of churches.....	70	206
Members in 1876.....	15,656	33,812
Members in 1886.....	16,829	42,382
Increase of members.....	1,173	8,571
Increase in ten years.....	7 p. ct.	25 p. ct.
Increase each year...	7-10ths of 1 p. ct.	2½ p. ct.

Whatever other inferences may be drawn, and whatever may be true in the case of men of exceptional abilities, it is clear that the long pastorates, as a whole, do not contribute to the growth of churches in membership. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's church reported only 33 more members in 1886 than in 1876. Thirty-three of the above churches, with pastors of 20 years and over, actually decreased in membership, or in a few cases reported barely the same number as ten years ago.

In the Cities.

It is claimed that the Congregational polity is better for the cities, because it affords an op-

portunity for longer pastorates, so much needed in the larger centers of the population. But to what extent does that system furnish longer pastorates in the cities? Let us see. In the large table which precedes* it will be noticed that there are 326 pastorates exceeding ten years. Where are they located? A careful examination of the Year-Book shows 241, or 74 per cent., in rural towns and villages, and 85, or only 26 per cent., in the cities.

So much is said about long pastorates in the large cities, and so many in the Methodist Episcopal Church are inclined to think that we need to make provision for the extension of the pastoral term in these places, that it will be well to examine this question more at length.

We take 81 cities, of 20,000 inhabitants and upward, in which there are Congregational churches. Their Year-Books furnish the needful data for testing the question. There are 359 Congregational churches in these cities. But 37, or 10.3 per cent. of the whole, must be reck-

* Pages 152, 153.

oned out, because reported as "vacant," without either pastors or stated supplies. The "pastors" and "stated supplies" in the remaining 322 churches have averaged in their present positions 5.9 years, not very long, certainly, but about two years longer than the average for the whole country, which we found to be 3.8 years.

Of these 322 churches, 61, or 18.6 per cent., reckoning all which belong to the class of ten years and upward, have had their present pastors, on the average, 19.1 years each. But 15 of these 61 belong to the class of twenty years and upward, and average 31.1 years.

The remaining 261, or 83.3 per cent., of the 322 churches having pastors and stated supplies have averaged 2.8 years. And this, too, it must be kept in mind, is in the cities, while 10.3 per cent. of all these city churches are left out of these calculations, having neither pastors nor stated supplies. This is certainly not a very strong exhibit in favor of long pastorates in cities.

But what of the success of the longer pastorates? Have they greatly succeeded in adding

members to the churches? The other advantages, real or supposed, are matters of personal opinion. Taking the churches which have had the same pastors during the last ten years, we find their membership increased 26 per cent., or 2.6 per cent. each year.

We find 15 churches which have had their pastors over 20 years. How have they succeeded? During the first ten years, 1866 to 1876, they gained 36 per cent., or 3.6 per cent. each year; but during the last ten years, 1876 to 1886, only 4 per cent., or four tenths of one per cent. each year.

In these same cities we find 66 churches which have had the same pastors 6, 4, and 3 years each. How have they succeeded? The increase of members has been:

In 16 churches, of 6 years' pastorates, 18 per cent., or 3 per cent. each year.

In 20 churches, of 4 years' pastorates, 21.3 per cent., or 5.3 per cent. each year.

In 30 churches, of 3 years' pastorates, 11.2 per cent., or 3.7 per cent. each year.

Total average increase, 3.9 per cent. each year, in churches with pastorates of 3, 4, and 6 years each.

Another Test.

We have taken the trouble to carefully collect the data for sixty* cities which in 1880 had a population of 20,000 inhabitants and upward. The great amount of labor involved has prevented extending this inquiry to more than two denominations—the Congregationalists and the Methodist Episcopal Church. These sixty cities take all the largest cities, and are distributed quite equally in New England, the Middle States, throughout the region between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains, and include four cities on the Pacific Coast. The periods of comparison are 1866 and 1886—twenty years—which will be a sufficient test. The question involved is whether, as far as can be judged by the statistics of the communicants, the itinerant polity suffers, as compared with the "settled" or Congregational polity in the large cities. Those of the Methodists comprise only the mem-

* The previous calculation for eighty-one cities of this class was for 1876 and 1886. Some of the data being not obtainable, for both denominations, in some of the cities, for 1866, it became necessary to limit the inquiry to sixty cities.

bers in full, and in both cases the work has been performed with conscientious care and patience. The following are the results:

	Communicants. 1866.	1886.
Congregationalists	42,877	90,866
Methodist Episcopal Church	85,121	183,391

Increase in Twenty Years.

	Actual.	Relative.
Congregationalists	47,989	112 p. ct.
Methodist Episcopal Church	98,271	116 p. ct.

The above calculation includes all the churches of these two denominations, in these aforesaid sixty cities of 20,000 inhabitants and upward, at the two dates, 1866 and 1886. It is evident that the churches of the itinerant polity have increased their membership more than the Congregational churches. The relative increase of the Methodist Episcopal Church is four per cent. more than that of the Congregationalists, and the actual increase, 98,271, is 7,405 more than the total members of the Congregational churches in those cities. So much for the success of the itinerancy in the cities.

The question of other advantages of the "set-

tled" polity is one upon which different views will be held. We do not believe the general extension of the term of Methodist pastorates would be productive of good. Possibly some exceptions, in large cities, might be made advantageously to the Church.

General View of Long Pastorates.

If we go back one hundred years, we find almost all the Congregational clergy settled for life. In 1830, in Massachusetts, the average of the settled pastorates was ten and three fourths years; seven and five sevenths years is about the average at the present time; but there is a large number of stated supplies in this State, whose average is now about three and one tenth years; and both classes, in Massachusetts, now average only five and six tenths years.

It is usually confessed that the long pastorates, from thirty to fifty years, with rare exceptions under unusually favorable circumstances, have not been promotive of the growth of the churches. A wide and close observer, a regular

correspondent of a leading newspaper, said a few years ago, "These long pastorates seldom leave a church in good condition;" that when the change is made it is "often in a broil," and is "followed by a succession of short pastorates"—a reaction from the disadvantages of the long ones. To us, who have observed these things as outside parties, it has appeared that these very long pastorates are usually determined by strong personal influence and friendships, rather than by consideration of benefits to accrue to the cause of Christ in building up and enlarging the Church. And the objection most frequently alleged against the Methodist itinerancy is that "it is hard to part with a minister when one has just come to know and love him." We are not insensible to the pleasure and value of Christian friendship; but we cannot withhold the suggestion that such arguments have a selfish basis, and put individual benefits in the place of the broader claims of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Of 271 pastors in Massachusetts, in 1776, 223

retained their pastorates until death; and only 48 were terminated by dismission or resignation. One had a ministry in the same parish over 70 years; 21, between 60 and 70 years; 51, between 50 and 60 years; 66, between 40 and 50 years; 62, between 30 and 40 years; 24, between 20 and 30 years; 32, between 10 and 20 years; and only 14 under 10 years. It would not be a difficult matter to show that there was little aggressive action during the middle and later portions of those pastorates. A knot of influential persons and families was built around the old pastor. The personal element predominated over the spiritual, and often to the injury of the spiritual.

Is it not better to attach people to the Church rather than to a particular minister? Will not the Church stand on a stronger, less fluctuating basis?

We have no doubt that the shortening of pastorates, during this century, has been one element which has contributed to the greater growth of the churches, and that if the vacant churches were regularly supplied with pas-

tors another most helpful advantage would be gained.

CONCLUSION.

What, then, is the conclusion to which we come, as regards the question of Church polity? We learn that the denominations which retain their personal preferences, in deciding the pastorate, do so to the detriment of the general good; and that those who forego their personal peferences do so to the advantage of the cause at large. What a commentary upon the words of St. Paul:

"*Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself.*"—ROMANS XV, 2, 3. (Revised Version.)

It cannot be impertinent to ask,

Which is the more Christian—to please ourselves, as ministers and churches, to the injury of the cause of God, or to sacrifice personal preferences for the good of the cause as a whole?

And which kind of Church polity recognizes the fundamental principle of the Gospel, that we are "members one of another?" These are questions to be pondered.

It is very plain, therefore, that the itinerant economy of Methodism by which its preachers are assigned to their fields of labor, which has occasioned so much criticism, and the other great connectional features of our Church polity are founded upon *the most vital principle of God's spiritual kingdom* — we are "members one of another;" yea, more, our Church polity is deeply rooted *in the fundamental race principle*, which recognizes the whole human family as "members one of another." Let this principle be every-where discarded in common life, and the race will not survive one generation; let it be discarded in the Church of God, and weakness and disintegration must follow.

The logic of this discussion inevitably vindicates the connectional and itinerant polity of Methodism. The line of argument is straight and irrefragible. No *ad captandum* advantage

has been taken. It will be well for Methodists who live under the overshadowing influence of Churches of the Congregational polity, in New England and some other localities, to intelligently study the Methodist polity before hastening to disparage it.

The following remarkable acknowledgment in favor of the itinerancy in the cities, in an editorial in the *Christian Union* of June 23, under the heading "Cathedral or Itinerant," is full of wisdom:

"Let the non-episcopal Churches emulate his example. Let them, in combination or singly, but in harmony, undertake at once to district all our large cities and manufacturing towns, and put an itinerant ministry into them, large enough in numbers to organize the germs of churches in every ward, and rich enough in intellectual and spiritual equipment to be a match for all infidel and sensual opposition. . . . While the six millions are going into a New York city cathedral, let the interest of one sixth of that amount go annually into an itinerant ministry in New York city, and the other five millions go as far as needed into local churches which that itinerant ministry may call into existence; and let the result demonstrate whether the methods of St. Peter's or the methods of the Franciscan friars are the most effective for the Christianization of a great and half-pagan city."

V.

LESSONS.

LESSONS.

1. From the foregoing discussion we see the logical and the vital relation of our "*General* Superintendency" to the economy of Methodism, and how incongruous a diocesan episcopacy would be in our peculiar polity.

2. We see, too, the indispensableness of the presiding eldership in our Church organization, and especially to the working of our itinerancy. It is not only a legitimate, but a necessary, concomitant of our polity—a connecting link, and an administrative factor.

3. In this light, too, we see why our peculiar tenure of Church property, especially the clause* required to be put in all the deeds of churches

* "The Trustees of said house shall at all times permit such Ministers and Preachers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, as shall from time to time be duly author-

and parsonages, is necessary. It is a wise and legitimate provision for any Church which maintains an itinerant ministry. Without it the ministers could not be stationed. No society which assents to the itinerancy can logically refuse to conform to this condition. The unifying bond that binds us in a common life must include the sanctuary as well as the individual minister and layman. The Church property must yield to this self-sacrificing spirit for the good of the whole. The same thing is true of all our connectional institutions and funds, the Book Concerns, the colleges, etc. They must be held by such tenures that they may subserve the general Church.

4. Our system of providing for the superannuated preachers, by funds raised from the societies at large, is also germane to our peculiar

ized by the General Conference of our Church, or by the Annual Conferences, to preach and expound therein God's holy word, and to execute the Discipline of the Church, and to administer the sacraments therein, according to the true meaning and purport of our Deed of Settlement."—*Discipline* of 1884, ¶ 384.

Church economy. Having shared in whatever disadvantages are involved in the itinerancy, for the good of the cause at large, and the societies having reaped the advantages of these self-sacrificing labors, it is fitting that the pecuniary support of the worn-out servants of the Church should be made a common cause.

5. So also all our connectional collections are a part of a great scheme. The collections for foreign missions, for home missions, for church aid, for freedmen's aid, education, etc., are put before all our people, on the principle that we are "members one of another."

6. The administration of discipline upon ministers by Conferences, rather than by individual societies, as in other denominations, is also based on this principle. An itinerant minister belongs to the Church at large, and is liable to be appointed anywhere.

7. But this peculiar economy cannot endure the inordinate self-seeking, the unscrupulous scheming, or the selfish combinations of over-ambitious men, either in the ministry or the laity.

These things are foreign to its spirit, and the effect of them can only be ruinous. Every instance of such exhibition is a breach of good faith with our polity. The germinal center and the animating spirit of the polity of Methodism is self-sacrifice of the individual for the good of the whole. It should be administered on this principle. It can be perpetuated on no other. An inordinate, scheming self-hood will destroy our polity.

8. Is it said that Methodism is not what it once was? Probably this is true. While great improvements have been made in medicine, education, mechanics, arts, philology, government, philosophy, science, etc., etc., it would not be creditable to any denomination to irreversibly anchor itself to the past, to face itself toward mediæval times, and refuse to avail itself of those helps which providence is developing and putting into its hands. When I began my ministry, I heard people croak about "old-fashioned Methodism." I asked my father, who commenced his ministry in 1816, if there was any such talk

then. He replied that there was, and it was echoed very dolefully. Then I asked an uncle, who entered our ministry in 1800, if at that early time there was such croaking. "Yes," he replied, "I remember it well; and a member of the class I first joined had been a housekeeper of Rev. John Wesley. She said she had heard that kind of talk years before in England." Let us be more zealous to talk up Methodism, and to live it out in our lives. This will help the Church and bless the world.

9. From the foregoing discussion we also see the true basis and limitations of Methodist denominationalism. A denominationalism intelligently built up within the foregoing limitations will be broad, attractive, healthful, and genuine. Supreme loyalty to Christ is the reigning spirit. If we believe that Methodism has been wonderfully honored of God in advancing his kingdom, and with God's blessing is now performing a part unequaled by any other religious body in evangelizing and saving the world, these are all-sufficient reasons for our existence as a distinct

denomination. These are reasons, too, why Methodism should be made to do her best. Let Methodism be more thoroughly and zealously worked. Improve it, we should, if we can; but, at all events, *work it; work it.* Let every Methodist work Methodism.

Such a denominationalism is honorable, and will commend itself. The excessive, narrow, and odious forms of sectarianism, the follies and blunders of certain High Church assumptions, have made denominational zeal unpopular and brought about a recoil from genuine, healthy church-membership. I use this term broadly, as expressing devotion to one's denomination. In a public address, not long ago, Rev. John Hall, D.D., of New York city, emphasized the value of an intelligent and considerate denominationalism. He said: "Every man is religiously bound to be a member of a Church; should know why he is in one rather than another; and should have a genuine enthusiasm for his own, while justly honoring all that is true in other Churches."

10. Methodism was born of a revival spirit, with deep heart-yearnings and longings after God; and it cannot live and perform its work without this spirit. Methodism has wonderfully penetrated, explored, aroused, elevated, and called into active exercise the religious consciousness. How has she been able to do it? By the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the human and the divine consciousness have been brought into sweet and active fellowship. The spiritual outcome will show the likeness of heaven. A spiritually baptized Church will work for God as no other Church can. Methodism, without this baptism, will lose its highest distinctiveness, its efficiency, and glory. Only a people loving God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves can thoroughly appreciate and work such a connectional itinerant polity.

METHODISM IN THE WHOLE WORLD.

These statistics are mostly for 1886, but some are for 1883, 1884, 1885.

CHURCHES.	Itinerant Ministers.	Local Preachers.	Lay Members.	Total Lay Members and Ministers.
Meth. Episcopal Church...	13,637	12,813	1,990,377	2,004,014
Meth. Epis. Church, South.	4,434	5,989	1,061,943	1,066,377
*Meth. Epis. Ch., African..	1,832	9,760	400,000	401,832
*Meth. E. Ch., African Zion	2,110	2,750	300,000	302,110
Meth. Epis. Ch., Colored...	1,046	683	155,000	156,046
M. E. Union Amer., Col'd.	60	50	21,000	21,060
Methodist Congregational..	225	21	13,750	13,750
*Methodist Free.....	453	348	14,478	14,931
†Methodist Independent...	30	....	5,000	5,000
Methodist Primitive.....	50	....	4,672	4,722
Methodist Protestant.....	1,570	929	128,709	130,279
†Methodist Reformed.....	75	....	3,000	3,000
*Meth. Wesleyan in U. S...	280	....	18,260	18,540
Kindred Methodist Bodies:				
Evangelical Association...	1,069	613	135,508	136,577
United Brethren.....	1,378	890	185,103	186,481
Total Methodists in U. S.	28,249	34,846	4,436,806	4,464,819
Meth. Church in Canada...	1,610	2,682	199,479	201,089
Methodists in Great Britain and Missions.....	4,935	37,725	909,519	914,454
Wesleyan Affiliating Conferences.....	935	9,218	172,997	173,932
Aggregate in the whole World.....	35,729	84,471	5,718,795	5,754,294

* Unable to get these statistics since 1884. † Estimated.

The full statistics for 1887 would reach six millions of communicants.

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